

SOAPSTONE SAGA

GROWING UP IN THE "GREATEST GENERATION"



OTHER BOOKS BY ROY BEASLEY:

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-GOD SPEAKS TODAY VOL. II

-KING OF KINGS, A STUDY OF REVELATION

-ALL ABOUT ANGELS

-ALL ABOUT SATAN

SOAPSTONE SAGA

**GROWING UP IN THE "GREATEST GENERATION"
(1920's, 1930's, 1940's)**



By

Roy Beasley

INTRODUCTION

By

Willard Collins

**J. C. Choate, Publisher,
Winona, Mississippi**

Cover photo (Soapstone Hill & Powell/Beasley Barn) by C. Danette Beasley

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Cover photo - Soapstone Hill & Powell/Beasley Barn by C. Danette Beasley

TO ORDER ADDITIONAL COPIES OF *SOAPSTONE SAGA*, write to:

**Roy Beasley
P. O. Box 111635
Nashville TN 37222**

DEDICATION

To My Beloved Family

Past and Present

And

To Generations Yet Unknown,

I Hereby Dedicate This Volume.

A STATEMENT FROM THE PUBLISHER

My friend and brother, Roy Beasley, and I attended David Lipscomb College together. I went on to work with local congregations in the States for a time and then, in 1962, my family and I moved to Karachi, Pakistan to establish the church. Roy also worked with local congregations, Stateside, and then began his *Restoration Radio Network* which has been very successful in bringing the Gospel to millions of hearts over the years. This network of broadcasts has wide coverage throughout the world, both through the spoken word and an extensive follow-up organization in response to requests for literature and other instruction. Volume 51 of our quarterly magazine, *The Voice of Truth International*, featured Restoration Radio as the cover story.

Through the years of continuing with our respective programs of work, Roy has written a number of books, some of which we have printed in our work in India and other mission points, and some of which he has printed here in the United States.

Soapstone Saga is a different genre. Roy has said, "I wanted simply to leave a record of what life was like in the days of the 'The Greatest Generation', and so I told about it in the setting of the experiences of a boy growing up during the Depression and WWII. The main character in my story is my grandmother, whom we called "Mammy", and what she meant to the family, the church, and the community. I also wrote of many of our neighbors, some of whom were quite colorful individuals--people hard to forget. I go back in history to try to show why the generation in which I grew up was the way it was."

We commend Roy for his efforts in recording this word picture of history for future generations. It is an honor to be associated with him in bringing this book to fruition.

J. C. Choate
Winona, MS 38967
June 1, 2007

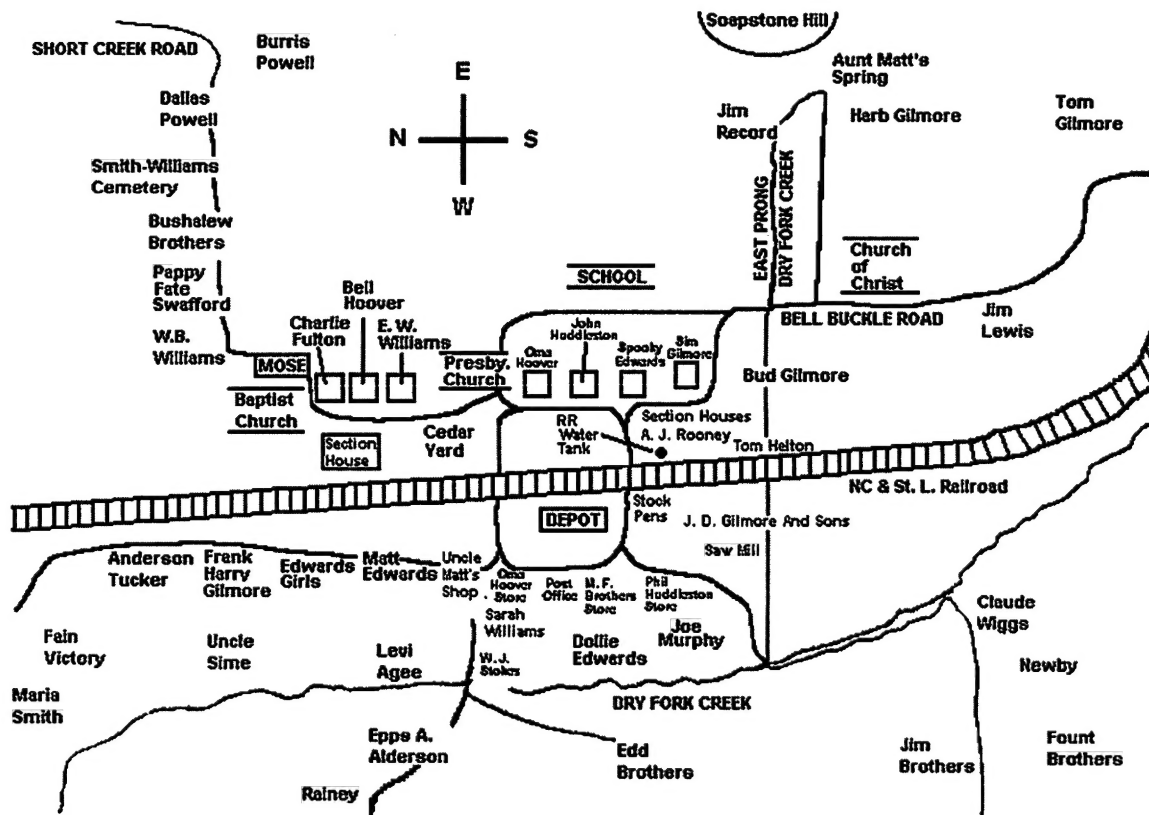
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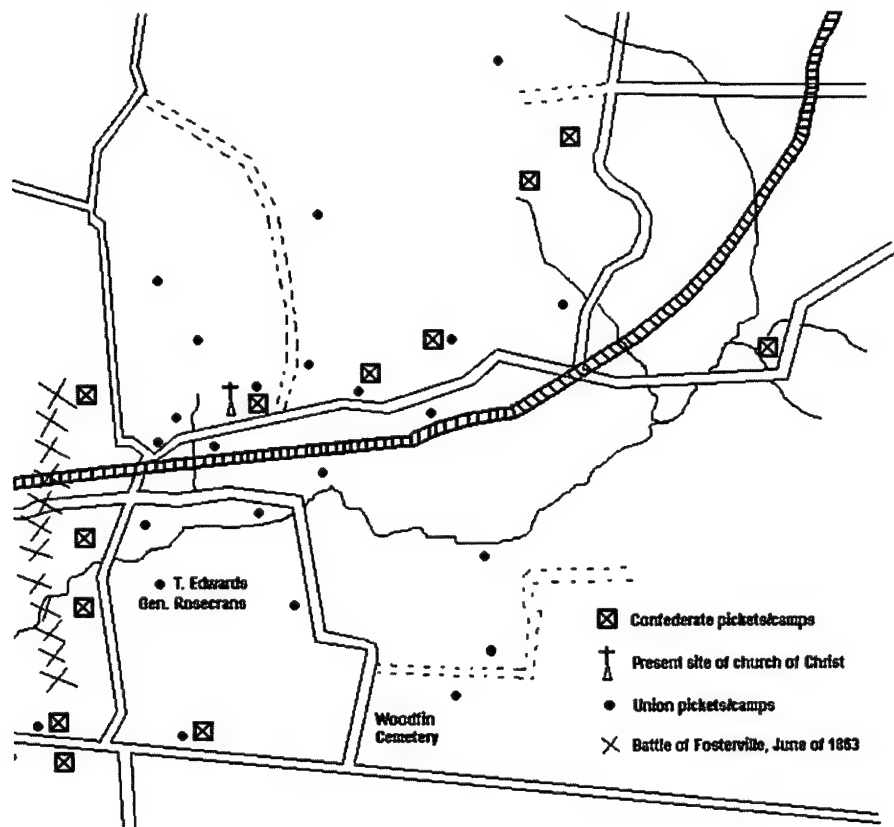
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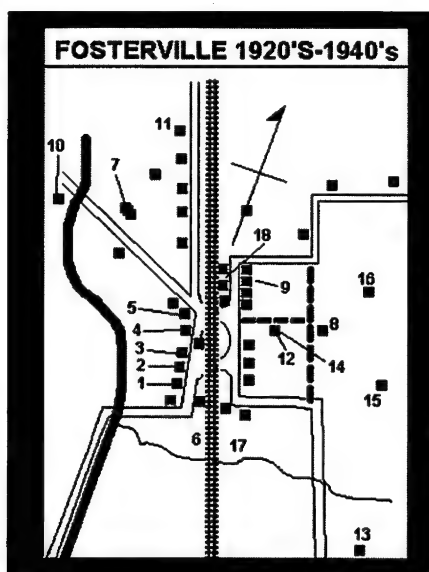
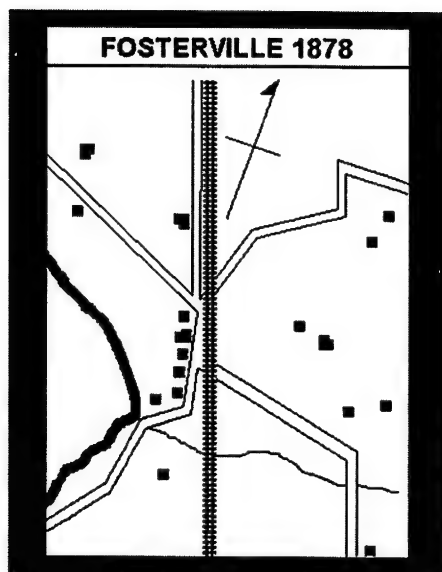
MAP #1 - FOSTERVILLE TURN OF THE CENTURY



MAP #2 - CIVIL WAR ERA / BATTLE OF FOSTERVILLE



MAPS #3 & 4



1. Blacksmith Shop

2. Kerr & Blalock Store

3. Blaire's Store

4. Post Office

5. Harris Store

6. Depot

7. School

8. Site of Old School

9. Telephone Co.

10. Edwards/Brothers House

11. Uncle Sime's Cottage

12. Baptists Church

13. Church of Christ

14. Site of Old Presbyterian Church

15. Unmarked Grave of Union Soldier

16. Site of Large Civil War Cave (filled in)

17. Site of Trail

18. Loading Stock Pens

19. Railroad Section Houses

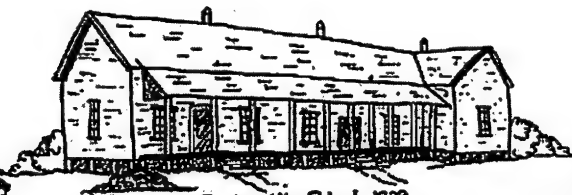
MAP #5 - DISTRICT 20



WELCOME TO FRIENDLY FOSTERVILLE



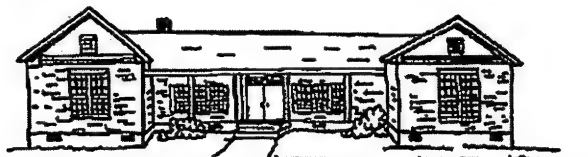
Fosterville Church of Christ 1986



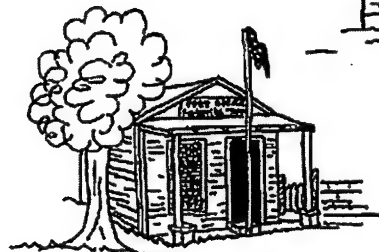
Fosterville School 1983



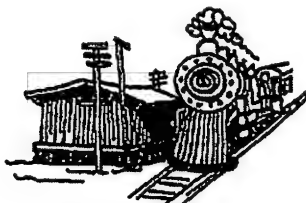
Fosterville Baptist Church 1934



Fosterville School 1927-28



Fosterville Post Office 1936



Fosterville Depot 1890



W.H. Harris Grocery 1923

"Fosterville Yesterday"
Alma Harris

INTRODUCTION

By

Willard Collins

I have known Roy Beasley, Jr. since he was almost a baby. I knew his mother, father, and grandmother. It was when, as a student at David Lipscomb College, I preached by monthly appointment for the Fosterville church of Christ where they were members. Roy is from a godly family. He attended David Lipscomb College for four years, earning a BA degree, and graduating in 1954. From there, he went on to earn an MA degree at Harding Graduate School in Memphis. He has been preaching the gospel for 58 years. His voice has been heard on radio by millions of people all around the world. He is Executive Director of Restoration Radio Network International which he founded in 1973.

Roy has written many published articles and some tracts. He is also the author of several books: *God Speaks Today, Vol. 1*; *God Speaks Today, Vol. 2*; *King of Kings, A Study of Revelation*; *All About Angels*; and *All About Satan*. He has finished manuscripts of two other books that he plans to publish soon: *Where On Earth Were the Saints?* and *The Evangelistic Angel*. He is also the Editor of Clayton Pepper's last book: *The Last Groan of a Dying Church*.

In *Soapstone Saga*, Roy writes about life in the small community where he grew up during the thirties and forties. He goes back to the early settlers and traces their influence upon this generation that Tom Brokaw described as the "Greatest Generation". He tells of life during the Civil war and battles that were fought locally. He includes a chronology of events of world significance affecting the lives of all people, even this small community. Through a series of stories, anecdotes and legends, he describes life as it was during the Great Depression and World War Two. He has included a chapter on the military maneuvers in Middle Tennessee and how the war affected the lives of small-town and rural people. He describes a phase of the post-war recovery in a chapter on "They Don't Make 'Em Like They Used To!"

For the young and old who have, for whatever reason, an interest in this era and area, reading this book is a must.

FOREWORD

Soapstone Saga could be considered an *Ethical Will*. Ethical Wills, existing from biblical times, are written statements outlining the values, memories, lessons, and beliefs that individuals consider most important in life and desire to preserve for future generations. Certainly, this book includes all of the above, but the author's purpose goes far beyond that. It's a memoir which chronicles the lives of ordinary people of a small, rural community where he grew up in the decades of the thirties and forties of the past century. Beginning with the settlers in the early 1800's, he focuses in on one side of his family, the Powells from Powellton, and their relatives, friends, and neighbors. The matriarch of the family was his grandmother, affectionately known by family-members as "Mammy". This is the generation that Tom Brokaw, the popular evening news TV anchorman, styled as the "Greatest Generation". A series of stories, anecdotes, folklore, and legends are gathered, telling the story of this family and historic community, giving insight to the faith, love, values, and dreams of those whose home was there. This is what gave them the strength and steel-like determination to survive the hardships of the Great Depression and World War II and to go on to do their part of building the greatest nation the world has ever known. It is a small community, not even appearing on many maps, taking up but a tiny portion of the planet Earth, but it has, in numerous ways, had a positive impact upon the lives of the people all around the world.

Why delve into the past? There are several reasons, but three will suffice:

- *It is interesting.* History is not fiction. It is about real people, how they thought and lived, as well as those of the future, including ours. Do you like mystery? Romance? Drama? You can find plenty of it in history books. And, sometimes, you will find that truth is stranger than fiction.
- *It explains who we are and how we got this way.* Why do we think and behave the way we do? History may give us a clue. Ideas, superstitions, prejudices, and beliefs are handed down from generation to generation. Customs are rooted in the past. A study of history may have the answers to many of our questions.
- *One may learn from the past.* I have often wondered why each succeeding generation keeps on making the same old mistakes. Those who ignore the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them over and over. History reveals triumphs and failures of those who have gone on before. This gives us a compass by which to steer a safe course. Why can't we learn from the mistakes of those before us and avoid them? But we must learn what those mistakes were, the consequences of those mistakes, and the steps taken to correct them and not to repeat them. Some of our greatest presidents were students of history because they wanted to avoid old mistakes of their predecessors and seek a safe guide

in making right decisions. Such a practice would, no doubt, be beneficial to all of us.

I started this project for my children, grandchildren, and the generations that follow. I used to love to listen to my grandmother tell about life as it was when she grew up. I think that most all children have that same curiosity. If not now, perhaps they will later on. The time will usually come when they will begin to wish that they had listened more closely and had been more inquisitive of their parents and grandparents. As I got into the writing, I decided that perhaps others may have an interest in the history of the area around Soapstone Hill and the people who have made this their home since the early 1800's.

Roy Beasley
Brentwood, Tennessee
April 9, 2007

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I want to thank Jeanette, my wife, and Philip and Danette, our children, for the encouragement they have given me for starting and then finishing this project. It has taken a lot of time over the past few months, and I am sure that it has interfered with some "honey do" plans that Jeanette had for me.

Most of what I have written is from memory. If there is any inaccuracy, it is not intentional but because of a faulty memory. I have tried to check out the accuracy of the facts presented as well as possible. In addition to what I have seen and heard as I grew up, there are the stories told by my parents, Roy and Estelle Beasley, and my grandmother Madge (Wallis) Powell. My mother also kept two scrapbooks from my infancy until graduation from college. In those scrapbooks are bits of historical information about WWII and the military maneuvers in Middle Tennessee. I also leaned heavily upon Elvira Brothers' book, *"Brothers and Others and Fosterville"*. Additionally, the genealogical research of Harold Beasley of the Beasley family and Judith Oldham's research of the Powell family were a great help. I have also done a great deal of research online using the *Family Tree Maker* produced by the Church of Latter Day Saints.

Some valuable information about the Powell family was shared with me in a 1994 interview with Aunt Verlie (Powell) Williams in her home in Romulus, Michigan. She was the last of eight children of my grandparents, Milton and Madge Powell.

I also want to thank Winston and Rachel Roberts and their two daughters, Dorothy and Carol Ann, for books they loaned to me about the Civil War in Middle Tennessee and historical information of Bedford County, Tennessee. Also, Dick Poplin, a local historian and a longtime writer of "Scraps of Poplin" in the Shelbyville, Tennessee *Times-Gazette*, for information I gleaned from articles he wrote and questions he answered and for pointing me in the right direction in my research. William Joseph Woodruff, a local historian, has shared with me a great deal of valuable information about the Civil War period.

In gathering material for this book, I interviewed Billy and Angie (Bikie) Lynch in their home in Fosterville, Tennessee, and Jack Woodruff in his home near Christiana, Tennessee. Many thanks to them for the time they gave me and the information shared.

Craig and Pam Lynch, the present owners of Soapstone Hill, have shared with me several old pictures and maps reproduced in this volume. Many thanks to them, also.

To D. J. Smith and Tim Smith of the Talstone Group, Brentwood, Tennessee, my gratitude for the cover design and the advice they have given me in the planning and publishing of this book.

There are numerous bits of information that I have gleaned from here and there without memory of the original source. To whomever they are, I am deeply grateful for their contribution to this effort.

SOAPSTONE SAGA: 1800-1952

PROLOGUE

"One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever." (Eccl. 1:4 KJV)

As one year blends into another, we know
That new generations will come as others go.

A generation. What is it? It is defined as *"the average length of time between the birth of the parents and the birth of their children."* We usually consider this to be about thirty years. In ancient times, a generation was much longer because of the longer average life span.

One day, I was sitting in my doctor's waiting room. (It seems that's where I spend much of my time anymore!) I picked up a magazine. It may have been *Time* or *Newsweek*, I don't recall. As I flipped through the pages, I came to an article near the end that captured my attention. It was about a speech given to a graduating class in 2005 by columnist Bill Bryson, author of *"A Short History of Almost Everything"*. I have noticed that most graduation speakers tend to talk about the future, but Mr. Bryson chose to talk about the past. He talked to this Florida graduation class about their connection to generations past. He informed them that DNA strands in each of us are about 6 feet long, but if divided into single strands, each would extend 22,000 miles! He went on to say that it takes two people to make one person, but it takes four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, sixteen great-great-grandparents, and so forth. If we could go all the way back to the first century, we would find hundreds of thousands of ancestors, and he claimed that a little bit of each one is in us--a little bit of Shakespeare, Charlemagne, Napoleon, and other famous historical people. That may sound far-fetched, but, in reality, it makes a lot of sense. Sometimes, two ordinary people, for example, may produce a genius. Where did that gene come from? It didn't come from the parents or the grandparents. It may have come from some ancestors who lived long ago. We never know when these genes will pop up. So, I tell young people that it does make a difference who they marry. I used to hear older folks talk about good bloodlines in humans as well as horses and cattle. They even talked about families having *good* or *bad* blood and that some families came from "good stock". I once heard Ira North, a preacher and a friend of mine, speak to a

Soapstone Saga: 1800-1952

group of young people at a school about choosing a mate for marriage. He said, "Boys, what about that cute girl you are attracted to? What is she going to look like thirty years from now? I'll tell you how to get some idea: Just take a look at her momma!"

Looks may be the less important thing to consider. After all, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," they say. What kind of people were the parents and grandparents morally and spiritually? Did they have diseases that are hereditary? What of their work habits as well as other habits? The answers to these questions are important. They may very well affect the happiness and welfare of the offspring for generations to come. We hope they will inherit the good traits, but the opposite may happen, and an undesirable trait could pop out. We should take these facts seriously for the sake of future generations, if not for our own happiness and contentment.

To illustrate: My father was a farmer and raised a small herd of purebred Holstein milk cows. He had his cows artificially bred. All went well until one of the cows gave birth to a *red* and white Holstein calf. Who had ever seen or heard of a *red* Holstein? Not my dad, nor anyone else we knew who knew anything about cattle. Everybody knew that Holsteins were *black* and white, not *red* and white. He was somewhat agitated and called the breeder to task. "What do you mean breeding my cow to anything but a Holstein?" he asked. The man, a friend of ours, said, "Mr. Roy, you've got something valuable. That was the *original* color of Holsteins." Well, that calmed my dad down, knowing that he had something unique. So, what did he do? He did what any good cattleman would do: He raised a new herd of *red* and white Holsteins, the prettiest you ever saw! This is an example of a gene skipping many generations before popping out again. That sometimes happens with livestock, and it can happen in humans.

As the scriptures say, "One generation comes and another goes away." This process is familiar to all of us, even to those who have never seen a Bible, and has continued undisturbed from the dawn of creation. There have been countless generations since then. Some have been good and some bad. But it is my purpose in this book to focus on one generation in particular--my own growing-up generation--the generation of the thirties and forties.

This is the generation that Tom Brokaw, the NBC news anchor man,¹ called "The Greatest Generation". He tells of being in Normandy for the 50th anniversary of D-Day. He said that he was well-prepared as far as research was concerned but that he was not prepared for the emotional experience. He saw veterans there who were then in their seventies and eighties. They walked the beaches where they had landed and visited the graves of their comrades who had been killed. He offered this touching tribute:

"They answered the call to help save the world from the two most powerful and ruthless military machines ever assembled. They faced

Growing Up in the "Greatest Generation"

great odds and a late start, but they did not protest. They fought in France, Belgium, Italy, Austria under primitive conditions and on bloody battlefields. When the fighting was over, they came home and started rebuilding their lives and the kind of world they wanted. They were mature beyond their years, but tempered by what they had had been through. They stayed true to their values of personal responsibility, duty, honor, and faith."

One night, at a restaurant, he was asked by Tim Russert of "Meet The Press" what were his thoughts. He quickly replied, "I think that this is the greatest generation any society has ever produced." He was aware that this sounded like an overstatement, and so he decided to write a book to support his claim. He tells the stories of young men and women who served in WWII, both in the fields of battle and on the home front. He tells of what they did in the war and what they have accomplished since then. This generation, he noted, is nearly gone. The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that about 3,200 WWII veterans die every month.

I don't know that this was the *greatest* generation, but I do believe that it was a *great* generation, and I am proud to be a part of it, although I was too young to serve in the military. What gave this generation the will-power to go to war on two fronts and to win against all odds? I have a theory.

First, it was because of a deep sense of faith in God and love for country which flourished without shame in the years in which they grew up, the 20's and 30's. It was encouraged by teachers in public school systems.

Second, it was because of the steel-like hardness that developed from a decade of hardship during the Great Depression. They did not give up nor give in then, and they refused to give up to an enemy who was determined to rob us of our heritage and freedom. These are the men and women of Tom Brokaw's "Greatest Generation". They are the ones who came back home and not only rebuilt their lives, but went to work to build the strongest economy and greatest nation the world has ever seen. If it were not for their sacrifice and determination, we would not have the luxuries and freedoms that we now enjoy and often take for granted. To them, we owe so much.

But, alas, as the wise man said, "*One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh...*" The torch has been passed on to others. How faithfully is it carried forward?

Journalist Tom Wolf has styled the decade of the 70's as the ME DECADE. The so-called "baby-boomers" were coming of age, and he could see an alarming trend developing. He was writing about the concerns of the seventies shifting from social and political justice to a more selfish, inward focus on individual well-being. What he saw happening in those areas was also evident in religion, as most churches can testify. There was a definite shift from an *outward* focus to an *inward* focus. The attitude was no longer "What can I do for my country?" but, "What does my country

Soapstone Saga: 1800-1952

owe me?" Or, applied to religion, no longer, "What can I do for the church?" but, "What *must* the church do for me?"

Why the change? It is because of a change in attitude which resulted from a change of thinking. All of this has resulted in a perceivable change of character. The heart of this generation is not the same as the heart of Tom Brokaw's "Great Generation". This can be seen socially, politically, and religiously. It was recognized in the Viet Nam war. Most of the old soldiers who went out to win during WWII could not understand the attitudes of the generation they spawned. It is an attitude that is still prevalent today in this twenty-first century.

There has always been a tendency for the younger generation to shove aside the older generation in preference to those of their own age. This is such a grave mistake, for younger people can profit vastly from the experience and wisdom of older men and women. They have already been over the road. Why should each succeeding generation keep on making the same mistakes over and over again? That was one of the principal reasons for the downfall of England's King Henry VIII. Receiving the crown at the age of seventeen, he had many admirable traits, but by the time he had reached old age, (the 50's) he had already married six times, putting away two wives and killing two. What a tragedy for a young man who started out with such promise and noble ambitions to come to the end of life regarded throughout the kingdom, and even all of Europe, as a tyrant, no longer loved but feared. Things may have turned out differently if he had not yielded to the counsel of younger men, rejecting the counsel of the older men because he thought they were "too slow". This was certainly the problem with King Rehoboam (I Kings 12:3-15). He rejected the counsel of the older and wiser men and accepted the counsel of the young ones with whom he had grown up. His reign was a disaster, but this set the tone for the rule of all his successors.

Concerning looking to the past for guidance, there are no truer words than those written by Daniel Webster:

*"We live in the past by a knowledge of history, and in the future by hope and anticipation. By ascending to an association with our ancestors; by contemplating their example and studying their character; by partaking their sentiments and imbibing their spirit; by accompanying them in their toils; by sympathizing in their sufferings and rejoicing in their successes and triumphs, we single our existence with theirs and seem to belong to their age."*²

CHAPTER 1

WHERE ON EARTH IS SOAPSTONE?

*"And of Joseph, he said, 'Blessed of the Lord
be his land...and for the chief things of the ancient
mountains and for the precious things of the
lasting hills. (Deut. 33:13, 15 KJV)*

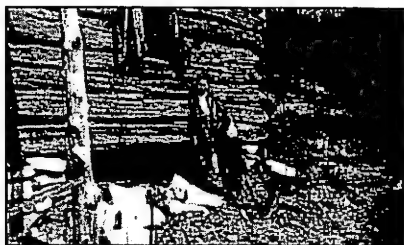
Soapstone is the name of a place. What is it that you see? "Just a hill," you say? Yes, it's a hill, but not just an ordinary hill. It is a *prominent* hill-among all beautiful, rolling hills of Middle Tennessee. As the wise sage long ago wrote, "(T)he lasting hills" offer "*precious things*." Soapstone is like that. It offers things that are precious. It has been there from the beginning and will remain until time is no more. It is a small part of God's wonderful handiwork.

Soapstone is located near our home where I grew up. Look out the front door, and there it is, dominating the landscape, just across a narrow valley and Bailey's Creek. It is about a mile east of Fosterville and can be seen from many miles away. It is located in southern Rutherford County, (District 20) Tennessee, near the Bedford County line.

THE 1878 MAP

I was taught that the three most important things in real estate are *location, location, location*. That is certainly true of this piece of real estate, for the residents at least. It has long been a local landmark. Consulting the map of 1878³, Fosterville is located about a mile east of the Murfreesboro and Shelbyville Turnpike on the N&C Railroad. A road crosses the railroad, much as it is today, and leads due north and then east for about a mile before turning north again. It is now the Short Creek Road. It passes the J. J. Neely place on the left (which at one time belonged to my great-grandfather, Wash Beasley) and the Elam farm on the right. It then turns left around our forty acres and heads directly north through a gap in the hills. Before reaching this point, however, a road turns off to the right immediately after rounding the curve that continues eastward to Liberty Gap. It passes the home of Mrs. Brothers on the left and the H. Brothers farm on the right which included Soapstone Hill. It continues on past the "Jolly House", an old log cabin which belonged to an ex-slave whose name was Jolly, still standing when I was a boy. The road continues on over a gap between Soapstone and Hickory Hill, passing the home of J. Powell on the left and M. Powell and M. Woodfin on the right. The old Powell Cemetery is located on the north side of the road. It then intersects with the Bell Buckle (Short Creek) road near

Soapstone Saga: 1800-1952



The Jolly house

the Liberty Gap church. It was here that a bloody Civil War battle was fought. However, when I was a boy, there was still a fairly good house located just over the gap between Soapstone and Hickory Hill. It belonged to Mr. Albert Alderson, and renters lived in it from time to time. The road, however, was so rough that it was almost impassable. The house fell into disrepair and was finally abandoned. Nothing remains along that old road anymore, and it is completely closed.

Returning to the road on the old map, it continued northward over a gap in the hills, past Bald Knob Hill on the right. At that time, it belonged to the estate of B. Smith, but later, it became the home of my uncle, Wallis Powell. The road continued northward past the farm of a Mrs. Doak (later belonging to the well-known sage, Jordan Sims) and a place called Forest Retreat and then on to the village of Christiana.

The map shows the Christiana road on the right side of a branch that drains Bald Knob. At first, I thought this to be a mistake because Milton Wyatt Powell and I used to go up and down an old road on the left side of the branch that led in the same direction. However, Joseph Woodruff, a local historian, believes that the map is correct and thinks that what we were following was actually the remains of an old Indian trail that led to the encampment of Black Fox, a renegade Indian, located on the site of today's city of Murfreesboro⁴.

My grandfather must have traveled the old road many times in his horse and buggy or on horseback going to the bank in Christiana and to Millersburg during his five-year courtship with my grandmother. Sometime later, a part of this road was rerouted. A new bridge was built across the stream running from Bald Knob, the approach being straightened before reaching the bridge and continuing on around a hill before turning eastward to intersect with the road running north and south along Short Creek connecting Bell Buckle and Christiana.

The 1878 map also shows some old wagon roads that had been abandoned long ago. Some evidences of these old wagon roads can still be seen. One such road intersected with the Liberty Gap road and led northward around the west face of Bald Knob and through a gap leading down a hill past a farm belonging to T. Brothers and on to the Short Creek Road. As boys, we used to follow this old trail. On one side were high bluffs where we saw what we thought were eagles nesting. We would yell to the tops of our voices just to hear our echoes bounce off the rock walls on either side. From the intersection of the Liberty Gap Road, the old trail goes southwest, gradually climbing the north face of Soapstone and continuing along the ridge past

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the farm of Harb Gilmore on the right and intersecting with the Bell Buckle Road just south of Fosterville. Woodruff told about the ruins of two log houses along this ridge that are now hidden by trees and underbrush. It is interesting to follow these old roads and wagon trails and speculate about where they led and for what purpose.

The name 'Soapstone' is unusual. No one knows the origin, but it probably originated from the kind of rock found there. Soapstone is a soft rock used by Indians and early settlers for making bowls, cups, and other utensils. It is identified as the highest peak in the center of two lower ridges extending from the east to the west. It is now nearly all covered with woods, tangled vines, and underbrush but, in the 30's and 40's, it was cleared and so was much of the eastern ridge. Farmers used goats on the hills to keep undergrowth under control. Part of it was tillable. Some was permanent woodland, and the rest was pasture. The eastern ridge used to belong to my great-grandfather, Dallas Powell, but was sold by my grandfather, Milton Powell, after he acquired it in the late teens. It was considered a part of the old home place, a total of 73 acres, although it was not adjacent to it. As teenagers, my uncles, Wallis and Jordan Powell, used to raise corn there. My aunt, Verlie (Powell) Williams⁵, remembered that she and the other girls were sent up the hill each day at noon to take lunch to the boys in the field. She said that, often, the boys, when they had eaten and cooled off, would get to scuffling and rolling around on the plowed ground and down the steep hill.

The western ridge, reaching almost to the Bell Buckle Road which ran along the railroad, has always been, as far back as I can remember, a jungle of trees and underbrush. Soapstone is next to the highest hill in that vicinity, reaching the height of 1,310 feet. Bald Knob is a little lower. The highest hill is Hickory Hill, which is about twenty feet higher, but Soapstone is better known⁶.

Before the white man came into this territory, the entire area was a vast hunting ground for Indians, mainly Cherokee and Creeks. All kinds of animals such as the bear, elk, and buffalo roamed freely. The forests were untouched. Not many, if any, permanent Indian settlements were located here. However, many artifacts have been found where hunting parties camped. Most of them lived in villages located in the general area of Chattanooga, then called Ross Landing, including the towns of Tsatanugi, Citico, Chickamauga, Long Island, Nickajack, Running Water, Telico, Tanase, Settico, Hiawassee, and Conasauga. These were located along the Tennessee River and in northern Alabama⁷. Sometimes, fierce fighting took place among competing tribes.

Southeast of Soapstone, perhaps twenty miles as the crow flies, near the town of Manchester, is the Old Stone Fort. Archeologists believe that it is a 2,000 year-old American Indian ceremonial site that was used for some 500 years. It covers an area of about fifty acres in a picturesque setting at the two forks of Duck River. But there is no indication that it ever served as a permanent settlement.

To the south of Soapstone are the towns of Bell Buckle and Wartrace. Both

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names indicate Indian influence. Tradition has it that Bell Buckle got its name from a figure of a cow bell and a buckle carved on a nearby beech tree. It is thought that this was done by Indians to convey the message that farmers with cows were living nearby⁸. Wartrace was originally known as Trickem⁹. In the early 1800's, the Great South Trail led from the Salt Lick near Nashboro (now Nashville) to the headwaters of Wartrace Creek¹⁰. Herds of buffalo used this and other trails moving toward the salt lick. The Indians also used these trails to go to war against other tribes and to attack the white settlements in Nashboro on the Cumberland River and other surrounding forts, thus, the name, "*War Trace*". This trail probably led within sight of Soapstone.

To the west of Soapstone, there is Highway 231, which began as a Buffalo path and an Indian trail to become a wagon road, a stagecoach route, and then a well-built toll road. Farther to the west is a vast, fertile valley that stretches out for miles with a line of blue-clad hills visible in the distance. This used to be known as Jordan's Valley. Due to its location, Soapstone was used as a lookout and a signal hill by both Indians and whites.

Just north of Soapstone, about four miles away, the village of Christiana can be seen. It had its beginning when the N&C railroad was built in the 1850's. It was, at first, a camp for the railroad workers. When the settlement moved from the turnpike over to the railroad, streets were laid out, lots sold, and businesses established, including a bank. I consider my roots in Christiana as well as Fosterville, for my dad was born and reared there, and all his brothers and other relatives lived there. I attended school there from the sixth grade through High School. Yes, Christiana still has a place in my heart.

Imagine standing on the summit of Soapstone in those early days of the 1800's. For many miles around, you could observe the movement of warriors and all kinds of animals. Standing there, you could, in your mind's eye, witness history pass in review.

But Soapstone has always offered something else *precious*, something very important for any community; it offered recreation for both young and old. For generations, it has been a challenge to climb up to the top and enjoy the fantastic view for many miles around. It was an exciting diversion from the humdrum affairs and toils of everyday life. Every year, the Fosterville School children and teachers took a day off to enjoy an excursion up Soapstone Hill where portions of several counties can be seen on a clear day. It was a day of fun and games. Church groups from all around would often come for picnics and outings. In her book, Elvira Brothers included a group picture of several in her family and others who braved the steep slopes of Soapstone in 1915¹¹. Several of these people I remember. Many of their descendants still live in the general vicinity. In the picture, the clothing worn by the women and girls certainly doesn't look adept for such a rugged and strenuous undertaking. After a stimulating physical exertion of climbing up the high hill, one

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could be rewarded by the feeling of accomplishment and enjoy the refreshing summer breezes. The scenery was superb. Perhaps there would be a delicious picnic lunch to be enjoyed.

To the west of the peak, there is a spring called Aunt Matt's Spring. She and her husband, Harb Gilmore, were early settlers. The water is as pure and clear as it has been for thousands of years. It gushes forth from a small cave in the hillside. Many years ago, someone closed up the entrance of the cave with a door that was usually kept locked. In the absence of electricity and modern refrigeration, this is where the people who lived there kept their milk, vegetables, and canned goods. There was a pipe that ran out to a water trough for the cattle. It was a cool, peaceful, and picturesque place. There was a shaded, grassy area there, where teenagers had picnics, wiener roasts, and parties. Younger children were often taken there for Easter egg hunts and other outings.

There was also a world of blackberry bushes nearby, and many came there to do blackberry picking. My father used to tell a story about when he and Uncle Jordan Powell went there to pick blackberries. They would fill their gallon or three-gallon buckets and empty them in a lard can nearby. The lard can was nearly full, and they went back to pick some more before going home. When they got back, a cow had gotten into the blackberries they had left in the lard can and had nearly eaten them all up! They almost brought home steak for dinner!

Soapstone and the other hills were claimed by fox-hunters as their territory. My grandfather, Milt Powell, was an avid fox-hunter. He and his friends used to let their dogs run while they sat around a campfire in the woods at night listening to their dogs and swapping tall tales until the wee hours of the morning. They could tell by the bark what was happening and whose dog it was that was in the lead. Sometimes, he and my grandmother would sit outside on the porch in the cool of the evening and listen to the dogs run until bedtime. He would give her a running commentary and analysis by the bark of the dogs. Fox-hunters did not kill foxes. They would not allow anyone to harm a fox any more than they would allow anyone to harm a good fox dog. In fact, they would almost kill anyone who intentionally killed a fox. They enjoyed listening to the dogs run, and it almost seemed that the foxes enjoyed the chase and would often give the dogs the slip. It was a game to them. That's where the term "outfoxed" originated.

The Soapstone Monster

The local residents around Soapstone had their legends. One of the tall tales that used to scare me half to death was about a local monster. Loc Ness has a sea serpent, and the northwestern forests have their "Big Foot", and we had, it was rumored, our very own monster! It was not a big monster, but a small one. It wasn't a two-legged monster, not a four-legged one. Actually, it was a snake. But it wasn't like any other

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snake you've seen – a black snake, a chicken snake, a harmless green snake, or even a rattlesnake. It was *a hoop snake*. As it was told to me, when a hoop snake spied its prey, it would form a hoop by attaching itself to its own tail. Then, it would roll down the hill like an old tire or wheel, gaining speed as it went, and striking the victim with poisonous venom. It was also said that when killed and chopped up, the snake had the ability to revive and wiggle around and join itself together again! The old man who told me this story when I was but a lad vowed that it was true and that he had seen one with his own eyes. He said that he saw one strike a tree and soon the tree withered and died! This caused me to be just a little wary as I wandered about, but I wasn't too worried because I figured that the old fellow was just pulling my leg.

CHAPTER II

SOME SOAPSTONE SOJOURNERS

"The character of any community is determined by its people" - Unknown

When I was away from home, especially when in the north, people would usually notice my slight southern accent and ask where I was from. I was never ashamed to claim the hills of Middle Tennessee and often proceeded to tell them that I was raised so far back in the hills that they had to pump in sunlight! Furthermore, I declared, the cows had legs on one side shorter than on the other side because of grazing around the sides of the hills. Of course, I was just joking, but, to my surprise, some took me seriously!

Before the time of the Interstate Highways, travelers from the North, driving to Florida on Highway 231, would sometimes stop and ask where they could take pictures of real-life hillbillies living in shacks perched on the sides of hills with dogs, pigs, and chickens roaming around in the yard and on the porch. That was the impression that Northerners had of Tennesseans. Some probably still do. Well, we almost hated to tell them, to their great disappointment, that they wouldn't find folks like that around here. We lived in the hills, but were not isolated or backward.

After the Civil War, up until the mid-twentieth century, there was often heard the rallying cry: "The South shall rise again!" Well, the fact is that the South *has* risen again -- socially, economically, educationally, and in every other way. There was a time, even in the 1920's and 30's, that Southerners were moving North in droves because that was where the jobs were and better living conditions. Now, the trend has reversed. Northerners have discovered the South. Large companies are moving to the southern states because of the climate, lower cost of living, lower taxes, and other considerations that affect the bottom line. I have talked with people who have come South who would not think of moving back North. They like the slower pace of living and the mild climate.

In some old files, I recently came across a touching assessment of the folks of Fosterville, evidently written by a former resident who only signed her name as "Ella, '58". She wrote:

"I recalled old Soapstone, Aunt Matt's Spring, Dry Fork Creek, the whistle of 94 as it wormed its way north on rings of steel to Murfreesboro and Nashville. But my deepest thoughts were of those wonderful people who live and lived among those treasured landmarks. People who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. People whose self-respect means more than money; people whose honesty and integrity means more

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than automobiles and yachts; people whose truthfulness means more than wealth; people whose fear of God means more than the frivolity of life. It made me swell with a feeling of satisfaction that I was a daughter of Tennessee, and I imbibed deep of the wells of my youth and again felt that I was a part of Fosterville with its softening and sweetening influence tugging at my heartstring, holding the old customs and traditions because they strengthen family ties, bind us to our friends, and make us one with mankind."

Charles Spurgeon once described a place he knew as a "hive of glass where nothing unobserved can pass". Fosterville was like that. Everybody knew everybody else. But it was a good place for a boy to grow up. There were many people, most of them unique in one way or another, who made a positive impression upon my life. Looking down from Soapstone Hill, one would have a bird's-eye-view of the Fosterville community. Clustered close together were the businesses, churches, the school, and the homes of our neighbors. It reminded me of an elaborate model village and railroad with toy trains, trucks, and cars. Fosterville laid out down below along both sides of the N&C Railroad. It was once considered a railroad town (Maps 3 & 4). An unnamed street ran north and south between the businesses and the railroad we'll just call "Main Street". The depot was between two railroad crossings. The street ran into a gravel road that continued northward along the railroad toward neighboring Christiana. The blacktop Fosterville Road ran westward across Dry Fork Creek bridge to Highway 231, about a mile away. To the south, "Main Street" became Brothers Road, which turned westward and connected with the Highway.

Let's go back in time and take a stroll around the village. Coming from the south on the Brothers Road, we first come to **Wes (Studebaker) Stewart's** blacksmith shop on the left. I always love to hear the ring of the anvil and watch Mr. Stewart at work. He often shoes our horses and mules and repairs my dad's plows and other tools and equipment. He is good at what he does. We watch as he fires up the forge and turns the billows by hand to make the fire burn hotter. He places the horseshoe on the fire until it is red-hot and then places it with tongs on his anvil and hammers it into shape so as to fit the hoof. He is also a good shade-tree mechanic. He once found an old, rusty well-drilling machine that was mounted on a vintage truck, an early 1900's model, towed it to his shop, got it running and actually drilled a few wells in the neighborhood. One was next door.

Next to the blacksmith shop is the **Kerr and Blalock General Store**. Mr. T. E. Kerr is the song leader at church and lives right across the railroad from his store. Mr. Blalock is his neighbor and a bee-keeper. He has bee hives scattered around on different farms. Some of his bee hives are on Uncle Wallis Powell's farm, right across the road from his house where he kept his horse, Jim. One day, Jim got too close to one of the hives and knocked it over. The vengeful bees stung him to death.

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On my way to school early one morning, I saw Mr. Blalock fall off the school roof that he and his son were replacing. It scared me. I thought that he surely was badly hurt, but he jumped up and climbed up the ladder and went back to work.

There is a shed behind the Kerr and Blalock store where horses are kept waiting to be shod. Across the road, next to the railroad, there are the stock pens that are used for shipping cattle to market by rail. I often use the plank fence to climb up onto to mount my horse.

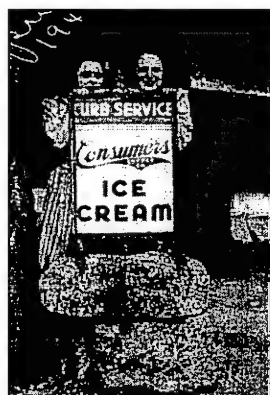
As we continue northward, there is a small, and somewhat run-down, store owned by **Mr. Blair**, an old man and quite feeble. He has his regular customers. He usually sits out front in a chair. We wave to him as we go by. His customers usually go in and help themselves and pay on their way out. His home is nearby on the Brothers Road.

Next is the Post Office, a small one-room frame building. **Mabel (Harris) Watkins** is the Post Mistress. Mail is delivered by train. Outgoing mail is snatched from a specially-rigged pole by a speeding train going toward Nashville. There is also a rural mail route driven by **Guy Jordan**.

The next business is the **W. H. (Huse) Harris** store. Mr. Harris is about the friendliest man I ever knew. He can



*Mabel Harris Watkins,
Postmistress*



*Bessie Bingham & Mabel
Harris at Fosterville store*

talk your ear off! He knows everybody and everybody's business. But that is understandable since so many men hang out around the store swapping tales and sharing the news. He calls them the "spit and whittle club". He bought the store from Mack Brothers back in the 20's. It was a large brick store, but burned in 1923 along with some other buildings. However, Mr. Harris managed to keep in business.

On the east side of the railroad is another street running parallel with the first one. It connects the Bell Buckle Road with the Short Creek Road. All are gravel roads. Between it and the railroad are several section houses, all painted yellow, where the men who work on the railroad and their families live. On the eastern side of the street are several houses and lots, and, along about the middle, is the brick building belonging to the Baptist church. The telephone exchange is in the Lee

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Crosslin home located on this side of the street. Running parallel to this street farther east is an old abandoned street where the old Fosterville frame school building once stood. I often use this rough road with deep wagon ruts as a shortcut going to church on my bicycle.

There, you have seen it all. That's Fosterville of the thirties and forties. There was a time when it was a bustling, busy place, and you could see it all happening from the top of Soapstone!

Fosterville, however, was not a place called perfect. There is no such place to be found on earth. The people of Fosterville were human and, as humans, they made mistakes. Among all those who have ever lived there, I supposed that, if you looked hard enough, you would find every sin in the Book--even murder! Satan, as a roaring lion going about from place to place, surely did not overlook Fosterville. Yet, that is an exception rather than the rule. The good far outweighs the evil. This community has always been made up of good, honest, patriotic, religious, hard-working people.

One of the local men who grew up in Fosterville was living with a woman in a house just around the road from us. It was a "common law marriage" as it was called in those days. A more modern term for it is "shacking up". She began stepping out on him. One night, he followed her and her lover and shot and killed her, for which he served a long sentence in the state penitentiary.

One common problem was alcoholism. There were not many problem drinkers but a few. Most people frowned upon it. The stores were closed on Sunday afternoons, and the complaint was that this is where the drinkers liked to hang out. This continued to be a problem until it began to be patrolled by the Constable, and they had to find another place where they could keep out of sight. Some folks were thought to brew their own back in the hills. I don't know, but I do know that plenty of liquor was available. One local alcoholic was going to show his children how to fly like Superman. He climbed up into the barn loft and jumped out. It wasn't the jump that hurt him but the sudden stop! It jarred him pretty hard, but no bones were broken, and he soon recovered.

At one time, there was a saloon in Fosterville, but that was long before my time. However, there were two, what we called honkytonks, nearby on the Highway. One of them was owned by the local Constable. He took his job pretty seriously. He had a '41 Ford equipped with a red light and a big siren on the fender. He probably made more arrests and wrote more tickets than all the Sheriff's Department combined. He set a speed trap and specialized in out-of-town speeders and DUI's. We accused him of luring men into his establishment, encouraging them to spend their money on alcohol, and then arresting them when they attempted to drive away. He had a very good deal going, it seemed. I don't know if that was true or not, but it probably had some truth in it.

I never knew anything about illegal drugs while growing up. I am sure that it was a problem in the big cities, but not where I lived. Some people, however, may

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have misused prescription drugs. There was a rumor about a popular doctor in Murfreesboro as being a source.

Blue cigarette smoke usually hovered like a pall all the way to the ceiling in the back of the Harris store where the men congregated. At church, men would stand outside smoking until Mr. Kerr started the first song. It was jokingly said that the purpose of the first song was to signal the men standing outside to put out their cigarettes and come in and take a seat. We even had some preachers in those days who smoked and thought nothing of it. My dad started smoking when he was young and continued until I was several years old. Of course, few people in those days realized the health hazards of smoking. But my mom impressed upon me that it was not the thing to do. She said that it was a "filthy habit" and a waste of money. Growing up, I was often offered a cigarette, but I would simply say, "No, thank you, I don't smoke." Almost always the reply was, "That's good, I wish I didn't." Mom never nagged my dad about his smoking, but something finally got through to him, and he quit, cold turkey. He just laid his small sack of tobacco and "makings" up on the mantel in plain sight and never rolled nor smoked another cigarette. I admired him for that.

Looking down from Soapstone toward the north, you would see the well-cared-for farm buildings and home of **Albert and Buena Alderson**. Soapstone was part of his large farm used for cattle grazing. I considered him to be the wealthiest man in our immediate community. Miss Buena was a Powell, a distant relative. She had inherited her old home place which was just across the road from our place. Mr. Albert became a partner with his half brother in a commission firm, Perry and Alderson, at the Union Stockyards in Nashville. This is where farmers brought their cattle to sell. He commuted to work every day, about 45 miles away. He traded for a new car every year, and I heard that he made \$600 a month! That was a fabulous sum in those days. I couldn't imagine that much money!

Mr. Albert had Soapstone Hill cleared off and allowed anyone to cross his property to venture to the top. He used most of it for pasture and had some hay fields along the lower portion where it was not too steep. Mr. Albert was good at public relations. He was a fairly large, imposing-looking man. He was always jovial, calling everybody "babe". "Hello, babe!" he would say, and acted like he was glad to see you. He talked around one of those "Sherlock Holmes" pipes clenched by his teeth. The tobacco he smoked smelled good.

Everybody liked Mr. Albert. He knew just about everybody. He loved to go to private auction sales, and auctioneers loved to see him coming because he was a big spender. Usually, he bought hard-to-sell items that we might consider junk. He accumulated a lot of this stuff, and, finally, had an auction sale himself to try to get rid of it. I recall that at one of these sales I bought a nail keg of odds and ends for less than a dollar. Mr. Albert thought that was really something for a kid to do. I used to wonder why he bought all that stuff and came to realize that, not only did he

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genuinely enjoy doing it, but that it was also good for business. The farmers liked him and would send him their cattle at market time. If the school was sending out children to sell candy or Christmas cards to raise money, I always hit on Mr. Albert first for a sure sale. I have wondered how many other kids did the same. In those days, selling punches from a punch board was popular, and I sometimes had some for sale, either for myself or for the school. Each punch would cost ten cents, a quarter, or as high as a dollar, depending upon the value of the prize. Whom do you suppose nearly always won? Why, it was usually Mr. Albert.

As most men, he could use some foul language at times just in conversation, but never in front of ladies. How times have changed! Although I never saw him inside a church building (except for his funeral), he was also noted for having a big heart. There is no telling how many needy people he helped. He also was generous with preachers, not with money, but with good things to eat, such as hams, sausages, tenderloin, and portions of beef and mutton.

On the far east slop of Soapstone lived **Art Powell**, a direct descendant of the early settlers. Art was a WWI veteran and a bachelor. He could almost be described as a semi-recluse, although he was not one who was soured on the world. The farm he lived on was landlocked. It did not border any roads nor was there any right-of-way that led to it. He lived a very simple life. When he decided to go to church or to the store, he would always ride a horse. He always had a fine horse and saddle. My dad sometimes rented pasture from him, and we would drive the cattle to his farm, crossing Mr. Albert's land. We went through some woods that my dad claimed to be infested with rattlesnakes. I never saw one, but I was always very careful.

Art's brother, **Claude Powell**, was also a veteran of WWI. He married and reared a family on this isolated farm. I never knew him, but my dad claimed that he didn't talk much, but when he did speak, it was always in rhyme. Hmm, a poet who didn't know it.

He had died before I was born, but I heard so much about Uncle **Pie Williams** that I almost feel like I knew him personally. He was described to me as having tobacco juice running down both sides of his chin and wearing his shoes on the wrong feet because, he claimed, "they will last longer!" It is said that my grandfather had a special affection for Uncle Pie, his mother's brother. Their father, Aaron Williams, was one-half Cherokee Indian, making them one-quarter Indian. That may have contributed to his peculiarities.

Cutie Williams was a son of Uncle Pie and Aunt Queen. He was handicapped in that he was born with a club foot and was unable to work. But he prospered, nevertheless. They lived in Murfreesboro and often visited church services dressed well and driving a nice automobile. What was the secret of his success? Really, no secret. He was a gambler and everyone knew it. He wasn't just a small-time gambler, either. He gambled for high stakes and won much more often than he lost. At his funeral, his son said that his father "never took money from anyone who could not

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afford it". He also inherited Indian blood.

Aunt Easter Powell (Her name was really 'Esther', but everybody pronounced it 'Easter'.) was one-of-a-kind. She was almost completely deaf. A small lady, probably less than 100 pounds, wearing a white bonnet, she always insisted on walking down the middle of the road. She claimed the right-of-way, coming and going. It was useless to sound your horn for she either could not hear it or else she ignored it. So, everybody who knew her just slowed down and got over to the side of the road as far as possible and eased by her. She would just smile and wave. At church, she always sat near the front with a large brass ear trumpet stuck in her ear.

One of my favorite people was **Uncle Sime Landum**, and now you can meet him, too. He was the oldest person I ever knew. He wasn't sure about when he was

born, but it is estimated that he was close to 116 when he died in 1947. He was an ex-slave.

In Fosterville, Tennessee, he was everybody's "uncle". It was an old southern custom to honor respected elderly men and women as "Uncle" and "Aunt". So, we had lots of "uncles" and "aunts", black and white. His wife was Aunt Tennie who was much younger than he, but she died several years before he did. He lived alone in a modest home, but was very active for a man his age. He had many friends who constantly looked in on him and saw to his needs, which were few. He was retired from the railroad, but kept busy caring for the Woodfin cemetery and doing odd jobs for neighboring farmers. He could be seen almost daily walking up and down the railroad tracks and around the village with a toe sack over his shoulder picking up lost and discarded items that he could use, and sometimes a little change. Uncle Sime did not have any sons or



Uncle Sime, ex-slave

daughters of his own, but he loved children. He had a habit of buying hard candy at the small country store and dividing it among us boys and girls. He also gave us pocket knives, marbles, and other trinkets that he found.

He would often sit down and gather us around and tell us about his life as a slave. He told of being separated from his mother as a small child. He said that he was sold to a new master who took him up behind him on his horse and rode away. He looked back and saw his mother standing in the middle of the road sobbing. That was the last time he saw her. That story made me feel so sad as a small boy.

On one occasion, he witnessed a murder as a young man. He must have been expecting trouble, for he had hidden himself up in a tree in the front yard to watch. A man came to the front of the house and called for the resident to come out. When he

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did, he pulled a pistol and shot him. The wounded man ran off the porch and around the house and then laid down on the porch and died. This frightened young Simon, and he got down out of the tree and ran away as fast as he could.

"How old are you, Uncle Sime?"

"I just don't recall," he would say. "Too old, I reckon."

"How many times were you sold as a slave, Uncle Sime?"

"I don't rightly know," he replied. "Three times, maybe. But I never had a bad master."

Late one fall, he accidentally scolded his foot while helping to butcher hogs. Mabel (Harris) Watkins went to his home daily to change the dressing. He was old and had trouble breathing. So, he usually slept in his chair before an open fire in the fireplace. It is thought that a coal of fire popped out on him and set him afire. To save his home, he ran outside where he burned to death. According to an old newspaper article, a neighbor saw him run from the house, but he died before they could get the fire out. It grieved the community. At his funeral, there were as many or more whites present as blacks. A white preacher, brother Clyde Gleaves, preached his funeral, and he was buried in the white Woodfin cemetery that he had kept up for so many years. He was beloved by all.

John and Margie Lynch lived on a farm across the road and between our land and Soapstone. Right across the road was a pasture with many rock ledges and outcroppings. It was too rough to be mowed with a bush hog or a mower. But they kept it clean even of small prickly pears. They did it the hard way with a grubbing hoe.

My mother told of a time when she went to my dad's field on the slope of Soapstone to get some roasting ears and garden vegetables they had planted there. Her route home led her through Mr. Lynch's place, near the spring house where he had a garden. Loaded down with her buckets full, she had to cross a line fence. Mr. Lynch happened to be standing there, and with an accusing look on his face, he said, "You didn't expect to see me here, did you, Sissy?" She thought he was accusing her of stealing from his garden. Later she mentioned the incident to Mrs. Lynch, and she just laughed and said, "Oh, honey, he was just teasing." My mother was never too sure about that. Mr. Lynch always suspected that people were stealing from him.

I thought Mrs. Lynch was about the smartest person I ever knew. She was very precise in her diction and owned an encyclopedia! My grandmother took me to her house to borrow her dictionary. This opened up to me a world of words.

The Lynch farm was the boyhood home of E. A. Elam. His father not only farmed but had a store in Fosterville. Water for the steam engines was piped from the spring on his place (the same spring mentioned above) to a water-tower next to the railroad. Mr. Elam had also been a slave-owner. **Paul Elam**, a black preacher who lives near Manchester, used to preach for the Green Meadow church of Christ. His ancestors were Elam slaves. They loved the Elams, and when the Civil War ended,

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they elected to stay on in their employ. E. A. Elam became a well-known preacher among churches of Christ about the turn of the century, as well as Editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, a Christian publication, and President of David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1874, he preached the first sermon in the present meeting place of the Fosterville congregation.

Uncle Raz Edwards was brother Elam's nephew. He and his wife, Miss Sarah, lived behind the church building. He used to read articles from the *Gospel Advocate* on Sundays when there was no preacher. Many of those articles, as I recall, were written by his uncle Elam. Uncle Raz was well up in years, but he did a lot of work on the farm of Macon Brothers.

Mrs. Sarah Edwards, Uncle Raz's wife, also had a famous relative, a nephew, Claude Jarman, Jr., of Nashville, who went to Hollywood and starred in the movie *"The Yearling"* as the young boy, Jodie. He did a good acting job, but I don't think he was ever in another movie. His father worked for Third National Bank in Nashville along with Gilmore Brothers of our community.



Claude Jarman, Jr., star of "The Yearling"

Miss Sarah was always tardy for church, although her home was just about two-hundred feet behind it. She was a good, gracious lady, but I never knew her to be on time for church. One Sunday, she came in after the preaching was over, and the Lord's Supper was about to be served. At that time, the auditorium faced the front and everybody could see who came in late. When she finally came in, folks would kind of glance knowingly at each other and smile.

For the most part, the citizens around Soapstone Hill were a happy people, though times were often tough. But there were also cases of tragedy and heartbreak. It seems sometimes that there are people in every community who always seem to have a dark cloud hovering over them wherever they go and have more than their share of troubles.

One case in particular was that of **Leone Miller** and her family. There were three of them: father, mother, and Leone. They bought a large farm on the Bell Buckle Road bordering the south side of Soapstone sometime in the early thirties. I thought they were rich. Leone was a privileged child. They always drove the latest model cars of the luxury class such as Buicks or Oldsmobiles. Everyone else in the community who could afford cars usually drove Fords or Chevrolets. The two ladies came to church in the finest of fashion. Mrs. Miller wore a fox fur with the head still attached draped around her shoulders. I had never seen this worn by ladies before and

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thought it curious.

Mr. Miller owned some walking horses. One day, the barn caught on fire, and several expensive horses died. Later, Mr. Miller died. Leone and her mother were left with the farm, but they were not farmers. They borrowed all they could to live on, but could not repay the loans. They had hogs and other cattle on the farm that died of old age. Leone could not bear to part with them. She lost her car and began going around dressed like a man in old bib overalls. Finally came the time when they were forced to sell out. They moved from a fine old farm house to a small tenant house owned by Mr. Albert Alderson. I doubt that they paid any rent. Leone would come to our house with a bucket to get water. They lived out the rest of their days in poverty. After their deaths, there was a sale. My mother and father bought a wooden arm chair with inlaid wood, and I still have it. Whenever I see it or sit down in it, I think of the tragedy of the Miller family.

The Harris store was usually open on Sunday morning before church time. People would come in to get the Sunday's *Nashville Tennessean*, including my dad. One morning, a car came careening into the village from the Brothers Road. It screeched to a stop in front of the Post Office, and the driver, whom everybody knew, got out and sat down on the running board, placed the muzzle of a shotgun in his mouth, and pulled the trigger. The man seemed a bit strange, but no one thought of him being capable of taking his own life like that.

One day, **Uncle Jordan** and **Aunt Emma Powell**, who lived over on the highway, were visiting my grandmother. They had not been there long before the telephone rang. The caller asked for Uncle Jordan. He answered and turned pale. He and Aunt Emma left immediately for Murfreesboro. Their oldest daughter Tootsie had been shot and was in the hospital. By the time they got there, she had expired, leaving behind two little girls. She had been shot by her estranged husband while her brother, Don, and her oldest daughter were in the adjoining room. Her husband, a WWII veteran received life imprisonment. This is probably the worst tragedy in our family, and Aunt Emma never really got over it. A few months later, Uncle Jordan heard that the story had been published in a tabloid. I was with them, along with Don, when they drove to a drug store in Murfreesboro and bought a copy. I will never forget Uncle Jordan and Aunt Emma reading that doctored-up story and sitting there crying as if their hearts would break.

Mabel Harris Watkins, the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. W. H. Harris, was my mother's best friend while growing up. Mom told me that if I had been a girl, I would have been named after Mabel. Mabel not only worked in the store when needed but also served as postmistress for many years. She married Sam Watkins of our community after he returned from WWII. Sam became a partner with Mr. Harris, and the name of the store was changed to "Harris and Watkins". Sam was well-liked for his good personality and his way of dealing with people. He also liked to play pranks.

One night, our telephone rang. When my mother answered, she heard a male

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voice she did not recognize asking if she was Estelle Beasley. He proceeded to say, "I am with WSM radio, and your name has been selected to try for our grand prize. Are you ready?" Mom got really nervous at this point. She stammered, "Yes, I guess so." "Well, then, Mrs. Beasley, answer this question correctly, and you will be the proud winner of our grand prize. What is the name of the Lone Ranger's horse? You have twenty seconds to answer." The clock began ticking. Mom couldn't think under such pressure. She turned to us and said, "Quick! What is the name of the Lone Ranger's horse?" I said, "Silver!" She spoke excitedly into the old telephone mouth-piece the answer: "His name is Silver!" "Congratulations," replied the voice, "You have just won our grand prize. In a few days, you will receive by express mail a large box containing - now, hold your breath - authentic manure from Silver's stable. How does that sound?" Mom's feathers fell. She then knew it was a joke, and she knew who it was. It was Sam Watkins, and Mabel was standing behind him giggling. They never let Mom forget about the name of the Lone Ranger's horse. But they always remained good friends.

This rather humorous story was told of Sam and Mabel during the war before their marriage. He was serving on one of the South Pacific islands. He wrote to Mabel and asked that she send him her bra for one of the native women. He said, "Don't worry. I wouldn't touch her with a ten-foot pole." Mabel sent him one with a letter saying, "If you wouldn't get closer than ten feet, I don't know how you are going to get this thing on her!"

Living behind the Fosterville cemetery was the **Bryant** family. Mr. Bryant was unique. He would kind of scuffle along the road carrying a toe sack of something that he probably purchased at the store and mumbling to himself. My dad said that Mr. Bryant made his living by representing a creamery. There were three children in the family. The oldest was a teen-aged girl named Merle. Merle was not quite right mentally. She never went to school, but she could carry on a conversation reasonably well with people she knew. She wore several layers of dresses even in the hot summer time. Sometimes she would wander away from home and get lost in the woods behind the house. We could hear her calling her parents and siblings for help. Eventually, Merle was taken to the home for the feeble-minded in Nashville. It was located across the Murfreesboro Pike from Berry Field. One day, Sam Watkins and a friend went to Nashville on some business. As they were returning, they decided to stop to see Merle. They found her relaxing under some of the stately oaks in front of the building. She seemed to be contented. Sam asked her, "Merle, what kind of people are here?" She replied, "Well, some are crazy as bed bugs. Others are not quite right in the head. And, some are just like you fellas." Sam used to tell this story as a joke on himself and laugh, implying that maybe that's where he needed to be, also.

After the Bryants left, **Lee and Pauline Jordan** and family bought the place. No finer Christian family ever lived. I went to school with their children. Often, we

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would walk home together. One of their daughters grew up, got married, and had a child of her own. Something happened. She became seriously ill, went into a coma, and, although she lived several years, never regained consciousness. When her daughter was getting ready to marry, she went to her mother's bedside with her happy news and, as the story goes, tears came to her mother's eyes.

Some of the happenings around Soapstone Hill would remind me of the soaps that the ladies used to listen to on the radio. As a young widow, **Aunt Grace Fulton** moved back to Fosterville from Toledo, Ohio with her two boys, **Marion (Buck)** and **Billy**. They lived in a small house on an acreage between our home and the village. I would go there to play with Billy who was about my age. But sometimes, Buck, who was in his early teens, would tease me just for the fun of it. They had electricity a good while before it became available to us. One day, we were standing on the back porch of their house. A light cord was hanging down but there was no bulb. Buck and Billy said, "Look-a-here, Roy, Jr. Stick your finger in this socket. It makes you feel so-o-o good!" Being a dumb kid, I did as they said and got the shock of my life! It took the curls right out of my hair! That was when I developed a healthy respect for electricity.

Aunt Grace used to come to our house and she and my mother would give one another a permanent and (ouch) pluck out each other's eyebrows. What price beauty!

Aunt Grace, according to Aunt Verlie, was considered the pretty one in the family. My grandmother told of one of her first boyfriends. He was a young man of the community that she and my grandfather did not approve of because of his drinking. She married Lewis Fulton and moved to Toledo, Ohio. After his death of TB of the throat (probably cancer), she and the boys moved back home. The old boyfriend gave it another try, coming to see her, but she turned him away. She later married Sidney Chrisman. It was far from a perfect match, for she was at least ten years older than he. Actually, he was just a boy, not much older than Buck. My grandmother was opposed to the marriage but to no avail. The marriage was doomed from the beginning. Mammy always worried about Aunt Grace. She was opposed to divorce and always drilled into my head that marriage was for keeps. "Be sure you have found the right one before you marry, and *stay* married," she said.

Aunt Grace then married Ralph Moore, a prominent farmer and cattle trader of Unionville, and she and Billy moved away from Fosterville. But Billy would occasionally come and spend a few days with me, and I would go to his house for visits. In 1941, my mother made a note in a scrapbook that Billy spent a few days with us at Christmastime and the he and I climbed to the top of Soapstone Hill. When they lived just down the road from us, he would come and we would play. After a while, though, we would usually get into an argument, and he would say, "I'm join' home!" (He couldn't pronounce "going".) He would start down the road and get out of sight, but I knew Billy. I waited and watched and, sure enough, here he would come back again--all forgiven and forgotten. I have often thought about how much

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adults could learn from children if they would. It would make for a much better world.

Billy and I had a knack of getting into mischief. We liked to play in water, building mud dams and sailing our boats, and in cars of visiting family-members, pretending we were the law, chasing criminals like in the movies. One day, Uncle Caleb Smith came to our house to help my dad do some work. Before he left, my dad gave me strict instructions not to wade in the spring because wading would cause the water to become muddy, and not (repeat: NOT) to mess around Uncle Caleb's car.

Well, no sooner than they were out of sight, Billy and I got the idea of cooling off in the spring. After all, the sediments would settle before long and no one would know the difference. Then, we started playing around Uncle Caleb's car (the lure of forbidden fruit). For some reason, Billy started letting air out of the tires, and I started blowing the horn. Well, that did it! I was caught in the act. Billy disappeared, "join' home", and I was left holding the bag. I was a little put out because, while I was being punished, Billy got off scot-free!

Uncle Wallis Powell and Aunt Ethel lived a short distance on around the road from us. He was considered a prosperous farmer, although his land, like ours, was more vertical than horizontal. He knew how to best utilize hill country. He owned a hill nearly as high as Soapstone, Bald Knob. He took after his father, Milton, being shrewd in his business-dealings. He wasn't what you would call a hard worker, toiling from sun up to sun down, but he knew how to use his head. Milt, his son, and I have been in the car with him when he would get to thinking about something, forget where he was, and drive over on the wrong side of the road. On one occasion, he went to the Harris store in Fosterville. After visiting with some of the men for a while, he left, got into the car, and drove home. In a few minutes, the telephone rang, and a man on the other end of the line said, "Wallis Powell, what did you mean driving away with my car?" Uncle Wallis was astonished. "I don't reckon I drove off in your car," he replied in his usual calm voice. The man said, "Well, you go out there and take a look!" He did, and sure enough, he had driven away in the wrong car. Another case of deep concentration about something.

It became a kind of joke in our family that, when Uncle Wallis sent a load of hogs or sheep or cattle to market, he would say, "Well, the market will be up today!" And, it usually was. But Uncle Wallis paid the price. My dad said that he had seen him go without socks all winter. He was frugal. He never wasted money. Opal, his daughter (he called her Scoot), told me that, when she was in college at Lipscomb, Uncle Wallis would drive her to the highway to catch the bus and give her fifty cents to spend on anything she liked during the week!

On one occasion, Milt and I, while playing, came across Uncle Wallis' bank book. It showed, as I remember, an \$80,000 balance. Now, it could have been \$80 or \$800, but with all those zeros, we thought it was \$80,000. That was a fabulous sum in those days, and we set out spreading the news! We ought to have been punished to

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teach us not to be so nosey and to keep our mouths shut and not meddle in other people's business. I mentioned this to Opal a few years ago, and she said her dad never had that much money. Maybe not, but I am not entirely convinced.

I loved to go to their house to play. One of my earliest memories is leaving home with my dog, headed for Uncle Wallis' place to play with Milt. I didn't think to tell my parents where I was going. When they couldn't find me, they became frantic. I remember that I was about half-way there when I looked back and saw my dad coming. His body language let me know I was in big trouble!

My dad and Uncle Wallis were almost like brothers. I remember only one time that my dad became somewhat agitated with him. Uncle Wallis had asked him to look out for some sheep (or goats, I don't remember which) at the stockyards. My dad located some and bought them. When he told Uncle Wallis about it and how much they cost, Uncle Wallis refused to take them because they cost too much. This left dad holding the bag, so to speak. He was a little upset, but he was able to get them sold. I doubt that he ever said anything else to Uncle Wallis about the incident. It was soon forgotten.

Of all the Soapstone neighbors, I must mention the **Lee Chrisman** family. Lee was a son of our closest neighbors, the Sam Chrismans. He married Christine Bingham, and, for a time, they lived in Mr. Chrisman's tenant house, which was close to us. They had a little girl, **Jo Ann**. I don't think their second child, **Robbie Lee** had been born yet. I was just a small boy looking for someone to play with. One time, I went to their house and noticed that the clock was an hour too fast. I asked Christine about it, and she explained that it was so that, when the alarm rang in the mornings, they would know that they had another hour to sleep!

I was a couple of years older than Jo Ann, and I guess she got tired of me coming around and wanted to get me to go home. That day, we were out in the yard running around, playing. She took a board with a nail sticking through it and deliberately placed it in the gate where she knew I would pass. Sure enough, I stepped on the nail, and it went all the way through my foot! I went home crying, and mom dressed it, wrapping a piece of fat meat around it, a home remedy, to draw out the poison. Even after all these years, I often tease Jo Ann about it: "If you got tired of me coming around, why didn't you just say, 'Roy, Jr., go home!'"

The **Mitchell Jones** family were also great neighbors of ours. My folks thought the world of Mitch and Clara and hated to see them move out of the community. They were what good neighbors should be, always helpful in any way they could be. They raised five children, two boys and three girls. After beginning to preach, I did the weddings for two of the girls. I once told Mitch that I thought he was one of the smartest men I knew. He asked, "What do you mean?" I said, "You always seemed to be able to figure out the best way to get things done, no matter how difficult." One of the first gospel meetings I held as a young, teenage preacher was a tent meeting at Mt. Hermon near Shelbyville. I borrowed Uncle Wallis' cattle truck and went to

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Nashville to pick up the tent from the Nashville Tent and Awning Company. Mitch went to help me put it up. I'm glad that he did, for I knew nothing about it. He went to work, laying it out and driving stakes, and soon, thanks to Mitch, the tent was up.

Mr. Fount Brothers was a well-known and beloved citizen of the community, highly respected. He had been left an orphan and raised by the Harb Gilmores. He grew up, bought a good farm and did well. Brothers Road was named after him. He and his wife, **Hattie**, raised two children: **Gilmore** and **Angie (Bikie)** who married **Billy Lynch**, also of the community. It was thought that Gilmore would marry Mabel Harris, for they were childhood sweethearts, but it didn't work out. Gilmore remained a bachelor, and Mabel married Sam Watkins. Both Gilmore and Bikie entered the banking business and retired from it. Fount Brothers was an elder of the Fosterville church of Christ. He and Miss Hattie lived in the same small house from their marriage until their deaths.

Curtis Arnold was about my mother's age and grew up on and around the road from us. He was an only child and did not marry until late in life. His nickname was "Tubby". He was grossly overweight, and some of the young men used to pick at him. As a grown man, he and his mother would often pass our house in a buggy. After the death of his parents, he bought a new truck and went into the milk-hauling business. Because of his lack of family and desire for acceptance, I felt that he allowed some of the boys in the community to take advantage of his generosity. They would borrow his truck or get him to take them to places. I always felt sorry for Curtis.

Caleb Smith, Jr., my cousin and a part-time preacher, told me this story about a prosperous farmer who lived nearby. It was during the 20's and 30's. He and some of his family acted as if they were a notch or two higher than everyone else. They lived in a fine house on a large farm. He hired farm laborers who he did not treat very well. One day they were working feverishly to get in hay lying on the ground before a storm broke. They didn't make it. The rain began pouring down, the lightning flashed and the thunder almost shook the earth. The man stood in the middle of the hay field soaking wet and, looking up into the sky with the rain pelting down, shook his fist and cursed God. About that time, he was struck by lightning and died. I have visited the cemetery where his family have their lot fenced off from the other graves, and have thought about how death is a great leveler. Here lies the remains of a man who may have thought he was better than everybody else but here he lies within just a few feet from others who he mistreated and looked down upon.

Bill Chrisman was a barber and a good one, too! He gave me my first haircut. When we went to town on Saturdays, I would go to his shop and take a number and wait my turn. I usually watched the men play billiards to pass the time. I was not allowed to play because it was closely associated with gambling.

There was a fellow who lived not far from us who was a medicine man. He peddled his own brew called "Night's Rest" which he bottled at his home. It was

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supposed to be good for about anything, and, believe it or not, some people actually bought it. It was probably at least 90% alcohol. Yes, there were all kinds of folks around Soapstone.

Friends 4-Ever

Franklin Smith was a neighbor boy about my age. He and I were good friends and played together often. Franklin and his family moved to Shelbyville where he married and got a job as a fireman.

Some communities have been amusingly described as having "beautiful horses and fast women". I don't know about horses, but Fosterville was known for having the prettiest and smartest girls found anywhere. **Gloria Jean Harris** was my first heart-throb. At six years old, she was the one I preferred bobbing apples with. Her hair reminded me of Shirley Temple, the child movie queen of the 30's. **Shirley Brothers** always reminded me of a typical southern belle. **Margaret Ann Faulk** was just the opposite. Somewhat of a tomboy, she was fun-loving, always smiling, revealing attractive cheek dimples. **Alice Ruth Bingham** was a redhead and had a temper to go with it. I used to tease her just to get her riled up, but soon she caught on and just ignored me. Her older sister, **Cornelia**, was in my class at school and was an excellent basketball player. **Jo Ann Chrisman** was always lady-like but not above hard work. She was a farm girl and often drove the tractor, milked the cows, and did other jobs with her father. My grandmother used to grumble about "Lee working Jo Ann too hard". **Mary Lou Brothers** was always a friendly girl. She was businesslike and smart as a whip. She married Don Powell, my cousin. They built a house on Uncle Jordan's farm on the highway, raised a family, and they all still live there in retirement.

Franklin Smith was a neighbor boy about my age. He and I were good friends and played together often. Franklin and his family moved to Shelbyville where he married and got a job as a fireman.

Samuel Albert Chrisman was the son of **J. B.** and **Burcie Bell Chrisman** and the grandson of the **Albert Aldersons** and the **Sam Chrismans**. We were in school together from the first grade through graduation.

Who's Minding the Store?

The best place to meet your neighbors is at the country store. Not only was it a convenient source of everyday necessities, but also a social place where people met and visited for awhile. Anyone who has never visited a real country store doesn't know what he has missed. It's not anything like the self-service super grocery stores nor even the modern "quick stop" markets. It was in a class by itself. It was an interesting place to browse. There are not many like them anymore.

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As the name "General Store" implies, they had just about everything: groceries, cold drinks, snacks, sandwiches, sewing materials, shoes, clothing, feed for the cattle, hardware supplies, tools, farm supplies - you name it. There is the story of a store at Eagleville once owned by a man named Green Hay. He claimed to have just about everything. Some of the men decided to put him to the test. One of them went to his place of business and said that he was looking for a second-hand pulpit. Mr. Hay said, "Just a minute." He went back into the back room and dragged out a second-hand pulpit! The Harris store was very much like that. I used to wonder what was stored in those side rooms and upstairs.

When entering the store, there as a tinkling bell, and you were always greeting with good smells and friendly smiles. The plank floors were oiled and always swept clean. Right in front, facing the door, was the ice cream chest. It was hard to pass, especially on a hot summer day. Back in those days, you could get a double-dipper for a nickel. Or, you could get a twin cone and two different flavors. On the right of the entrance were a table and benches. This is where customers could sit and make a meal of baloney, cheese, crackers, potato chips, soft drinks, and a candy bar, ice cream, or cookies for dessert. The baloney and cheese were custom-cut on the slicing machine and weighed on the scales that hung from the ceiling. The left hand took you by the clothing and hardware sections. There were hats, shoes, belts, boots, and rain slickers. Mr. and Mrs. Harris didn't need a yard stick to measure cloth. Both had a knack of measuring a yard of cloth from the end of his thumb to the shoulder. It turned out to be about as accurate as you could get. In the springtime, there were all kinds of garden and flower seeds for sale, as well as tomato plants and seed potatoes. They also sold coal-oil lamps, kerosene, cooking utensils, and patent machines for both man and beast. For the farm, there would be horseshoes, harnesses, and nails.

Taking the right-hand aisle, you would pass the soft drink machines on one side of the candy display or the other. All for a nickel! There was even penny candy! Then, you found yourself in the grocery section. You could give them your list, and it would be filled promptly. No waiting, no searching, no carts to push, no hassles. Your order would be placed in a cardboard box or a paper sack while you visited with your neighbors gathered in the back of the store. If you didn't have any cash, you'd just say, "Charge it," and go on your way. (There were no such things as credit cards or check cards in those days.) They carried their own credit service-a service with a smile. Sadly, Mr. Harris had to write-off a lot of debts during the Depression. He quipped that he didn't need the money "but the bank did!"

In the wintertime, men would gather in the back around a big wood heater, burning red-hot. There was what looked like a couple of old church benches and some chairs and nail kegs to sit on. There was nearly always a checker game going using soft-drink bottle tops. There was a roll-top desk and an old fashioned telephone hanging on the wall.

It was a good place to get caught up on community news. Sometimes, it would

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be politics. Almost everyone, though, were old-fashioned Democrats. Occasionally, there would be religious discussions between Baptists and Church of Christ members. A lot of scripture was quoted back and forth, but no one could surpass **Lee Crosslin** in quoting scripture; although he, at that time, was not a member of any church. He studied his Bible, though, and could tie up just about anybody in talking religion. One day, he would argue one side and, the next day, take the opposite position.

At the pump, gas sold for .32 cents a gallon! Can you believe it? The amount of gas you wanted was pumped up from the storage tank underground, by hand, into the glassed-in container at the top of the pump and then was fed through the hose into the auto tank by gravity.

Across the street was the large public scale where farmers and truckers could weigh their loads. To the side of the store was an ice house where you could buy ice for your iced tea or making ice cream in the summertime.

The Harrises worked sixteen or eighteen hours a day. Mrs. Harris was nearly always there. If she wasn't waiting on customers, she was sitting in her rocking chair in the back of the store with her crocheting. They practically lived in the store. Mabel, their daughter, and Edmund, their son, also helped out. It was a family business.

The Auctioneer

Another place where country people liked to gather was at public auctions. Nearly every weekend, the hills and hollows reverberated with the sound of the auctioneer's chant. Auctions were popular in market farm produce, surplus tools and equipment, real estate, cattle, household furniture, and even just "junk". Most estates were disposed of in this way. It was also an opportunity for entertainment and socializing.

J. P. Leathers was probably the best-known and most popular auctioneer in the '30s and '40s. Auctioneers usually wore the honorary title of Colonel". Because of his vibrant style and personality, Col. Leathers had a loyal following. Folks like his wit and enjoyed his friendly banter with folks in the audience. He was a salesman's salesman and a natural-born entertainer. This was the way he warmed up his audience. Promptly at the time advertised, he would climb up into a farm wagon or the bed of a pickup truck and, with a strong voice, start the proceedings by announcing the purpose of the sale and the rules of the auction. It was to be an auction with or without "reserve". "With reserve" allowed the seller to withhold and article from sale if he felt that it was not bringing enough. "Without reserve" was a commitment by the seller to sell to the highest bidder. He may, however, stipulate that bidding start at a certain figure.

Small items usually sold first because most of the crowd would be there. Then

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the larger items and cattle came up for sale. Real estate was sold promptly at the time advertised. Numbers were often given to potential bidders. There were assistants to take the names of buyers and collect the money and others to help display the articles to be sold. The, he began his familiar sing-song chant: "Now, give me a bid! What will you give? Who'll give ten dollars? Ten, ten, give me ten? Well, make it five! Give me five! Thank you! Now, ten..."

He spit out the words rapid fire. The bidding started and sometimes the competition became furious. "I have ten! Who'll make it twenty? Twenty I have! Now, thirty..." The auctioneer zeroed in on two or three hot bidders. It was hard to keep up. Once, I became so confused that I bid against myself! How embarrassing!

"SOLD!" he would cry. And then came the next item. The audience was warming up.

Auctions fascinated me as a boy. Just for the fun of it, I once took an auctioneering course and actually obtained an auctioneer's license. I became "Col. Beasley"! We learned the auctioneer's chant and studied real estate sales and the various styles of furniture and antiques, makes of farm machinery, as well as breeds of cattle. One of the popular breeds of cattle was Limousine. My instructor told me the story of a student who took the state exam. One of the questions was to describe the Limousine. He wrote: It is a big, long, black automobile!"

*Typical hand-bill of a
farm auction sale*

AUCTION SALE

of

Personal Property

I will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash on the premises four miles west of Fosterville, one and a half miles east of Midland, just off the Midland dirt road on

Wednesday, Sept. 22, 1943

(Sale starts promptly at ten o'clock)

The following property:—

Eight Jersey milk cows, five young ones with first calves	
One year-old halber	One nine-year-old brood mare
One Jersey calf	
One two-year-old Allen walking filly	One seven-year-old horse
Two brood sows	
Two gilts	Nine shoats, sixty to seventy pounds
One good Deering Mower	One disc cultivator
One two-horse wagon	One disc harrow
One John Deere turning plow, good as new	
One two-row corn planter	One cotton planter
Two, good as new, milk cans and strainer	
One pair wagon lines	One cream separator
One pair wagon brooching	Two pairs plow harness
And other items too numerous to mention	

Charles Beasley, Owner

J. P. Leathers, Auctioneer

Soapstone Saga: 1800-1952

Finding Friends and Influencing People

At an early age, I learned the value of friends and friendships. Someone has said that God divided man into men so that they might enjoy the friendship of each other. We had plenty of friends around Soapstone Hill. The beauty of true friendship is revealed upon the pages of that Grand Old Book, the Bible, by the heavenly brush of inspiration. It tells of the friendships of Jonathan and David and of Ruth and Naomi. It also says:

*A friend loveth at all times,
and a brother is born for adversity. (Prov. 17:17)*

*A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly;
and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. (Prov. 18:24)*

One definition of a friend is: "A friend is a person who knows us and still likes us." Abraham Lincoln once said, "If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are a sincere friend."

In a recent *Times Magazine* article, "You Gotta Have Friends", Robert Putnam observed that Americans are now more socially isolated than ever before. He said that the "boomers" (children of those of the "Greatest Generation") had fewer friends than their parents and that their children had fewer still. Some of the results of isolation is that the crime rate rises, generosity shrivels, and death comes sooner. He thinks that Television is the main culprit but admits that the jury is still out on that¹².

Often, as a boy, I would climb the slopes of Soapstone and stand there watching the passenger trains go far below and wondered about who those people were, where they were from, and where they were going. I wondered about what lay beyond the horizon and what the world was like beyond what my eyes could see. After I grew up, I had the privilege of finding out for myself and meeting people and seeing places I had only read about or dreamed of. Ah, the memories of the folks who lived around Soapstone Hill.

CHAPTER III

ROOTS RUN DEEP AND WIDE

*"People will not look forward to posterity
who never look backward to their ancestors" --Edmund Burke*

Tennessee was first settled at Watauga in Upper East Tennessee, which was considered part of North Carolina. Meanwhile, the French established Fort Prud'homme in West Tennessee. After the Revolutionary War, Tennessee was settled from three directions: From North Carolina to the Cumberland Plateau; from the Mississippi River eastward along the rivers of mid-state; and into Middle Tennessee, around Fort Nashboro along the Cumberland River, from the Ohio. Most of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland Plateau opened to settlement with the treaty of January 7, 1806, but many settlers were already here. Settlements first sprouted up along the waterways such as the Duck, Elk, and Stones Rivers. Tennessee became the 16th state of the Union in 1796, and John Sevier, who fought in the Revolutionary War, was the first governor.

It was in the early 1800's, and just imagine YOU WERE THERE when settlers began moving into the region. Some came by the Tennessee, Ohio, and Cumberland Rivers. Others came over land by way of the "Broadway of America", a road through Knoxville to Nashville that opened in 1785. Soldiers escorted people over the Cumberland Mountains because of the danger of robbers and Indian attacks. You could watch them come by ox carts and mule trains with all of their belongings. Some came as far as they could by riverboat. They came for many reasons. But, most were simply looking for a home-a place they could call their own. They were willing to do whatever it took to carve out a new life in the wilderness. It was not long after the founding of Fort Nashboro on the Cumberland River that a trading post was located along the trail midway between Murfreesboro and Shelbyville. It was named "Fosterville" in honor of the man who first started it. Gradually, other settlers moved into the area, and a school was built. It was a simple, one-room log building with a puncheon floor nicknamed "seed tick". This name speaks volumes concerning the harsh conditions under which the early settlers lived. William Moore was one of those students. In 1903, at the age of 73, he wrote a book of poems called "Odds and Ends". In one poem, he described life in "Old Fosterville":

Old Fosterville! We look back on thee now
With tender thoughts, and often wonder how
And why it was that we, together thrown,
Should ever to the outer world be known.

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We call to mind those far back halcyon days,
The 'Possum and the 'Coon hunts joyous ways,
And all the boys-they called on "Butting Ram"
Others, John, Bill and Jim, Steve, Bob and Sam.

But all are gone, strange things have come to pass,
These boys are scattered, dead, alas, alas!
One of them fought in the blue, the others gray,
But all now sleep in church yards, far away;
Their strifes, then fierce with bitter, angry hate,
No longer live to vex our noble State.

No matter now, the rushing world goes on.
Nor heeds, not recks the myriads who are gone.
Where the, "a hundred thousand" almost stunned,
"A billion" now seems but a common fund;

Our Nation then, comparatively weak,
Stands strong today, ready when called, to speak
And no great move, dare other Nations make
Until of us they careful council take.

These things may well impress the thoughtful mind,
And charge the philosophic how to find
The cause of these marvels-how they came-
And will proportioned future growth be same?

But after all, it may be best that we
Shall not the future's far-off secrets see;
'Twere wise, perhaps, to hug the happy hope
That all good things will come within our scope
If, patiently, we justly bide our time,
And work, and wait, in prose as well as rhyme.

Judging our progress by the century past,
We ask ourselves the question, "Can it last?"
Yet, reasoning fairly from analogy,
No optimistic mind can fail to see,
That not far off, remote or distant date,
Aerial palaces floating through the State,
Making their daily landings without jars,

Growing Up in the "Greatest Generation"

At all Earth's ports, and e'en, perhaps, at Mars¹³.

It is interesting how he spoke in this rhyme about how strong the nation had become within his lifetime. Also, there is his prediction of air travel and a journey even to Mars. In another poem, "Retrospect, Introspect, Prospect", Mr. Moore described "seed tick" school:

Standing on expectation's Mount today,
And looking back through life's long devious way,
A thousand treasured Memories o'er us rush
And thrill us with a deep oppressive hush.

We seem to see, with retrospective eye,
An artless boy, whose hopes e'en then beat high,
As through the cedar glades he trudged to school
With stern resolve to shun the Dunce's stool
That Teacher Roberts-simple, guileless man-
Had set in front for lazy boys to scan.

Ah! Those were days of innocence and ease,
When wants were few and boys not hard to please.
The days when stage coach drivers blew their horn
To 'rouse the sleeping postmaster at morn.
And notify him of the approaching mail
As down "Lee's Knob" their teams would fairly sail
With champing bits and foaming nostrils wide,
Drawing their human freight, worn out with ride.
To Fosterville-the village of the rocks,
Cedars, and Sinkholes-village of hard knocks.

To village school house, built of cedar logs,
Between whose cracks might crawl the boys and dogs
With Webster's Speller, Pike's Arithmetic,
And "rule of three", (where stupid boys would stick)
For any modest boy on earth below.

This good old teacher taught, and oft would sing,
That too much learning was a dangerous thing;
And that to read, and cipher and to write,
Was all boys needed, if not too much quite,
"These college notions," he would often say,

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"Are apt to lead our country boys astray";
And then, to illustrate his sage advice,
And would to himself refer, "Look here, how nice."

But that was more than sixty years ago,
When ox carts ruled and all the world went slow,
Before steel rails were laid or wires were strung
That now fill space and talk in every tongue;
Before a "Trust" or Millionaire was known
Within our temperate sublunary zone.

But these things pass our comprehension, stop
Let us return to homely, commonplace,
And meet our hum drum duties face to face.
Let us consider what we may owe,
To help the others as we cheerfully go,
Along our tortuous journey through this vale-
Sometimes, it may be with a loss of sail.

Our duties, if we will, are plain and clear,
The "Golden Rule" should to us all be dear;
Its simple teachings point the unerring way,
Which, if daily kept, no man need fear
God, man or devil, hereafter not here.
Keep out of debt, own no man anything,
Then you need not envy Potentate or King;
And when the time to lay your burdens down
Comes on apace, you will have earned your crown
Of honor; and the music will begin,
"Well done, thou good and faithful Servant, enter in."

January 10, 1903¹⁴

Old and New Fosterville

"Old Fosterville" was located where the Middletown or Midland Road intersects with Highway 231. From this point, there were two roads that led eastward. One led toward Millersburg and the area which later became known as Christiana. The other led toward where Fosterville is now located and on eastward to Liberty Gap and what is now the Short Creek Road. The Murfreesboro/Shelbyville wagon trail became a well-built toll road not long before the Civil War broke out. It had

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Tollgate house
Don & Mary Lou Powell, owners

taken several years from conception to completion. A tollgate was placed every five miles along with the toll-keeper's cabin. One of those small log cabins was a room in the farm house owned by my uncle, Jordan Powell. His son, Don, and I often played in that room. It was originally built of logs in the 1790's and has been recently restored by Don. While the work was being done, an old tollgate sign was discovered. The posted charges were: .20 cents for twenty head of hogs or sheep; .50 cents for twenty head of horned

or neat cattle; .02 cents for horse or mule in a drove; .06 ¼ cents for horse or mule not in a drove; .25 cents for a four-wheeled pleasure carriage; .25 cents for a two-wheeled riding carriage; .25 cents for a loaded wagon; .12 ½ cents for a cart; and .12 ½ cents for a hogshead of tobacco.¹⁵

According to Elvira Brothers¹⁶, a local historian, Mr. Foster sold his business to a young entrepreneur, Thomas Edwards, and moved away. Thomas Edwards was energetic and ambitious. He was responsible for getting a Post Office for the community and was appointed the first postmaster in 1834. He also operated a wagon train business and acquired many acres of land for farming. In 1851, when the new N&C Railroad tracks reached the vicinity, he moved his home, Post Office, and business to the present location. His house was moved by oxen and still stands facing eastward overlooking Dry Fork Creek. When I was growing up, it belonged to the Edd Brothers family and was named 'Eastview'.

Over on the pike stood Roseland, the home of Major William Guy. (It was located across the highway from the golf course.) A pass through the hills was named Guy's Gap in honor of him. Construction on the home continued for five years and was completed in 1837. The bricks were made on-site and the walls were about 14 inches thick. The large mantels and beautiful woodwork were made by slaves. The walls were plastered and hand-painted. It was furnished with the finest furniture and there was a magnificent garden. People came for many miles around just to see it. During the Civil war, the family had to hide on the back of the place from the Union army as it advanced from the bloody battle of Stones River to confront the Confederates on Highland Rim. Later, they moved into the slave quarters and the Yankees used the house as their headquarters. The land was purchased by Billy and Angie Lynch and the old house, then in ruins, was torn down. They used the bricks and much of the old materials in remodeling their home.

Railroad Town



Shipping cattle



All Aboard!



Hunter Brothers, local locomotive engineer

Thomas Edwards moved his business to the railroad and became the Station Master and an Express Agent. In time, Fosterville became known as a "Railroad Town". The depot was painted yellow and trimmed with green. It had a ticket window, a passenger waiting area, and an area for Express shipments coming and going. There was a platform and loading dock offering a good place to loaf in the shade and watch the trains go by.

There was a water tower for the steam engines. The water was piped by gravity flow from a spring about a half a mile away on the Lynch farm in the valley near our home. Joey Woodruff told me that he had found the remains of the old metal pipe and that, instead of running straight, it zigzagged in order to go around the many rocks. There were two side tracks where the boxcars were often left to be unloaded. Once, my dad bought a car-load of feed for his cattle. My cousin, Wayne Powell, and I had the job of unloading the boxcar and hauling the feed to our barn. It is unbelievable the capacity of one boxcar!

In the decade after WWII, the railroads declined and Fosterville declined with it. Nothing much is left of the "Railroad Town". The railroad, though, brought prosperity for a time. Business was good. Stores were opened. One was built of brick. It was destroyed by fire, however, in 1923 along with some other businesses. **Mack Brothers**, who later owned a large wholesale grocery business in Nashville, got his start here. There was also a cedar yard and a woodworking shop run by **Will Fulton**.

And, oh yes, there was a saloon. This was about the turn of the Twentieth Century. It is said that my great-grandfather, **Squire Dallas Powell**, ran the saloon for awhile. I don't know for sure.

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My grandmother never talked about it. That's not surprising, since she hated alcohol with a passion.

In 1890, Fosterville was almost completely destroyed by a tornado from which it never fully recovered. Another devastating storm struck in the early twenties. I remember hearing my grandmother speak of seeing the storm from her house on the hill. Some dishes were found a couple of miles away in the hills. She also told of a train wreck near Fosterville. The train engine was on fire and one of the crew was trapped inside. When he realized that a rescue was hopeless because of the heat of the fire, he begged someone to get a gun and kill him. He had rather die that way than burn to death.

The True Story of Cynthia Ann Parker

As land became available, more and more settlers moved into Middle Tennessee from North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, and other places. Among the "movers" was a preacher and his family by the name of Benjamin Parker.¹⁷ They settled in the Flat Creek community in Bedford County where he preached. After awhile, the family moved on in a covered wagon to Illinois and then to the Texas territory. There, they were attacked by the Comanche Indians. All were killed except for two daughters who were carried away as captives. One of the daughters died, but Cynthia Ann Parker lived. She grew up among the Indians and became one of them. She married the chief of the tribe and had a son who became the infamous Indian chief, Quantum Parker. The Comanches were fearless warriors and expert horsemen who brought death and havoc to early settlers in western Texas and other nearby territories. Upon finally surrendering, Quantum Parker negotiated with the government for a reservation in western Oklahoma and a herd of buffalo. This story has been the subject of books and numerous articles. A movie was produced a few years ago about the Parker family.

Closer to Soapstone Hill, many of the early settlers found land and built log houses. There were the Brothers, Pages, Penns, Loftins, Lynches, Powells, Hortons, Stovalls, Thomases, Fugitts, Williams, Prewitts, Gilmores, Edwards, Fosters, and a host of others.¹⁸ Tombstones in several old cemeteries around Soapstone bear the names of many of these early settlers and their descendants.

Stranger From Wales

James E. Wallis, my great-grandfather, was a Civil War veteran. (See the next chapter on "Brother Against Brother" and read of his wartime experiences.) He was married twice. There were two children by his first wife, an Arnold from Bedford County. After her death, he and Lucy Johnson married and had three more children: Madge Mae (my grandmother), Willie, and Alva. Lucy died of TB (then known as

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consumption). Since Madge was the oldest, she did most of the housekeeping for her father and took care of the younger children. She married my grandfather, Milton Powell, in 1894 after a five-year courtship. They met the preacher in the middle of the road and were married while sitting in a buggy. I have traced the Wallis family back to England. It is thought that they came to England from Wales by the way of Scotland. In Scotland, they inherited the name Wallis, which means "a stranger from Wales".

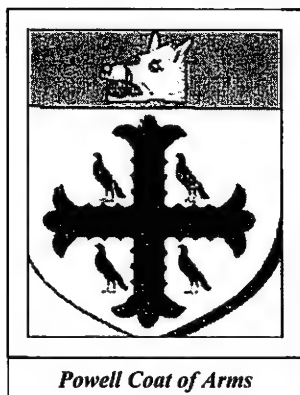
The Viking Connection

To the north of Soapstone, in the Millersburg district, the Johnsons and their close friends, the Millers, moved from Kentucky and settled on several hundred acres of land in the early 1800's.¹⁹ The Johnson log house still stands and has been partially restored. I have a very old cherry press that once belonged to Lucy Johnson. Every time I see the original Johnson house, I wonder if that was the original home of the old press.

I have traced the Johnson family all the way back to medieval England and, from there, to the seafaring Vikings of Norway and other Scandinavian countries. In England, some were rather affluent, related to petty kings and Earls. One was murdered and another died on the gallows in the Tower of London. Before or during the Scandinavian centuries, one ancestor was a prince in Russia. In fact, I have traced the Johnson family all the way back to the first century! Think of the DNA that involves!

The Powells of Powellton

Powellton was a town in England where many of the Powells originated. Sometimes, the name was spelled "Powel" or "Howel". The name Powell results from the blending of two Welsh words, "ap" which means "son of" and "Howel" which was sometimes spelled "Hywel". They probably immigrated to England from Wales. Two Powells, a father and a son, left England and became residents of Jamestown, Virginia in the early 1600's. The father, William Powell (1550-1623), was a merchant, and his son, John Ap Powell (1574-1638), was a tailor. William died just before Jamestown was abandoned. John was born in Powellton, lived in Jamestown, but died in Elizabeth City, Virginia. One of his descendants, John Powell and his wife, Anna Glosson, came to Tennessee from North Carolina in



Powell Coat of Arms

about 1830.²⁰

John and Anna Powell settled on several hundred acres of hill land to the north and east and including Soapstone Hill. They were my great, great grandparents. At their deaths, the land was divided and sub-divided among their heirs. Their youngest son, Dallas, married Virginia Williams, a daughter of another early settler, Aaron Williams, who was one-half Cherokee Indian from Virginia. As a youth, he moved into Tennessee with the Frances Brothers family. He never again saw his mother. Virginia or "Jenny" was one of the sixteen children of Aaron and Patsy (Brothers) Williams. Thus, I have some Indian blood in me. Will Rogers was part Cherokee. He often said, "I have Indian blood in me. I have just enough white blood for you to question my honesty."

At this point, there is an interesting sidelight in the Powell genealogy. As mentioned above, Patsy Brothers was the daughter of Frances Brothers and his wife, Sarah Penn, from Virginia. Sarah was a distant relative of William Penn of Pennsylvania. According to research done by a cousin, Judith Oldham²¹ of Texas, Sarah's third great-grandfather was George Penn. His brother, Giles, was the grandfather of William. She also found that one of Sarah's cousins was John Penn who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Sarah is buried in the Brothers Cemetery by the side of her husband. The inscription reads: "Sarah consort of F. Brothers d. 1856 age 70."²²

In 1883, Dallas and "Jenny" acquired about forty acres north of Soapstone which has been passed down to me through the generations. It used to have a log house, probably a "dog-trot" style. It was later torn down and a three-room frame house of the Victorian style was built. It was heated with two wood-burning back-to-back fireplaces. The fireplaces and chimney were built of native stone. There are two half-glass front doors opening up onto a wrap-around front porch. There was also a back porch which later became a small room. The log kitchen remained separate from the house for fear of fire. For the times, though small, it would have been considered a very nice house. The log kitchen continued in use for many years but was later torn down. When I was a boy, the old fountain stones could still be seen.

According to tradition, my great-grandmother, Virginia, underwent gallstone surgery on the kitchen table by the light of a coal-oil lamp. She did not survive the operation. Later, my great-grandfather remarried and built two more rooms onto the house, a kitchen and dining room. When my grandfather acquired the property from the other heirs in about 1918, Uncle Wallis Powell used the old log kitchen to store his new "courting" buggy. The old house still stands, although it has gone through several renovations. The foundation has settled some, the floor sags in places, but the



*Aaron Williams, half
Cherokee Indian, my
great-great grandfather*

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floor joists are cedar logs, probably taken off the surrounding acreage, and they are as sound as the day they were laid.



Madge Powell & Squire Dallas house (where trials were held on the front porch)

My great-grandfather, Dallas Powell, was always referred to as "Squire Dallas". For a time, he was a Squire or Justice of the Peace of the 20th District of Rutherford County. A Squire was a public official position that dated back to colonial times. It was a part of Common Law that was brought over from England by our ancestors. When the new Tennessee constitution was adopted in 1837, the old militia districts became civil districts. There were not more than

twenty-five in a county. Each district was to have two Justices of the Peace who were either appointed or elected. These Justices of the Peace were called "Squires". Squires had the authority to hold court for minor offences and to officiate weddings. In the 1800's, Squires were what we could call "County Commissioners" today. Family tradition has it that he sometimes held court on the front porch of the house.

Milton and Madge Powell were a typical young couple. They married in 1894 and soon started a family. It was an age when large families were the norm. All survived. They were:

NAME	BIRTH	DEATH	MARRIED	CHILDREN
Euda	1895	1979	Caleb Smith	7
Doris	1896	1970	Lora Smith	5
Suela	1897	1983	Moody Lamb	7
Wallis	1899	1992	Ethel Wyatt	3
Jordan	1902	1978	Emma Fulton	3
Grace	1904	1991	Lewis Fulton/ Sidney Chrisman/ Ralph Moore	2 3
Verlie	1906	2001	Eugene Jernigan/ Bob Williams	1
Estelle	1910	1994	Roy Beasley, Sr.	1

Growing Up in the "Greatest Generation"

Tall Tales, Talk and Timely Traditions

Almost everyone, children and grandchildren, called my grandmother "Mammy". She was known for her stories and her wise, and sometimes funny, sayings. My grandfather, Milt, told her this story:

As children, the boys happened to be at home alone one day. (It was probably the old log "dog-trot" house that preceded the present house.) They started playing hide-and-seek. One of the boys ran and jumped into an old trunk. After everyone else was found, they figured out where the other one was hiding. They sneaked around quietly and locked the old trunk. Then, they started running around in the house yelling, "The house is on fire! The house is on fire! Get everything out!" The boy in the trunk couldn't get out, and so he started beating on the trunk from the inside, crying, "Somebody get the old trunk out! Somebody get the old trunk out!" Boys have always been boys.

Milt Powell was always a prankster and somewhat of a humorist. He once hired a young black boy to help him do some work. At lunch time, they went to the house, washed up, and sat down on the back porch to wait for my grandmother to finish the meal. The young man was tired and he began dozing. My grandfather got up and tiptoed into the house, motioning for my grandmother to keep quiet. He went into another room where there was a trunk of old out-dated clothes of an aunt who had died. He put on an old dress, a shawl, and a bonnet. Then, he went out the front door and slipped around to the back where the young man was still dozing. He took his chin in his hand and asked in a squeaky voice, "Whar is Mr. Milt?" The youth nearly had a heart attack. He let out a blood-curdling scream and jumped up and ran as fast as his feet could carry him. He hit the road fairly flying with my grandfather running after him with his long dress tail flying. It must have been a hilarious thing to watch. By this time, he had lost his bonnet, so the young man could see who he was. But he was still hesitant. My grandfather finally persuaded him to stop and come on back, assuring him that everything was alright. Finally, the young man, embarrassed, returned to the house and ate his lunch.

In those days, there was a brand of flour called "Bedford's Best". The flour came in nice sacks that women often used for making dresses and other types of clothing. One day, my grandfather, riding along the narrow country road in his buggy, overtook a rather large black woman carrying a basket. As he passed, she stepped off to the side of the road and fell sprawling. Her dress flew up revealing her underpants. Written across the seat were the words, "Bedford's Best!"

It was quite common in those days for dogs to have what was called "running fits". It was supposed to have been caused by worms. A dog might be lying around sleeping and, for no apparent reason, take off running. Some nights, my grandparents would be asleep and the dogs would be in the front yard or on the porch. All of a sudden, one or more of them would take off running around the house. My

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grandfather would arouse half-asleep and exclaim, "They're off!"

Mammy always hated laziness. She was always busy doing something. Even when she was sitting down to rest, she was sewing or quilting or snapping green beans. She used to tell this story:

There was, in a certain community, a man who was lazy. He was the laziest man who ever lived. He just would not do a lick of work. He would not provide for his family. He was always looking for a hand-out. So, the people of the community got sick and tired of him. They decided to go down to the cemetery, dig a grave, and bury him-alive! However, as they laid him down in the grave and were about to fill it with dirt, one of the men took pity upon him and said, "Fellers, let's not do this thing! I'll give him a wagon load of corn!" The man in the grave, upon hearing this generous offer, rose up and asked, "Is it shucked?" It became a kind of family joke. If someone were to say, "I'll give you something" or "I'll do something for you", the retort would usually be "Is it shucked?"

Folks of that generation had a different kind of a sense of humor. What might not be funny to us in our generation was often hilarious to them. They saw things from a different perspective and in a different light. A story Mammy used to tell and laugh about was of a peddler with a cart going up and down the residential streets in town selling garden produce. He would call out, "Turn-up-GREEN, ladies!" This taught me my first lesson in communication. Inflection on words can change meanings.

Another story was of a country bumpkin who was head-over-heels in love with a girl. He was trying hard to express his affection for her by vowing to do anything for her. He loved her so much that he would swim the ocean and even go through fire for her. When he got ready to leave, he gave her a good-night kiss and said, "See you next Saturday night, if it don't rain!"

Still another story she told was of a young red-neck who took his girl to an ice cream social. He bought himself a cone of strawberry ice cream and, turning to her, he said, "Shore is good, Sally. Better buy you one!"

The family loved funny stories about one another. One was about when Aunt Seula and Uncle Moody first married. They lived in an old house somewhere in the sticks. One night, they were frightened by a weird noise outside. Seula grabbed a poker and went toward the door ready to attack. Moody was right behind her saying, "Go on ahead, honey. I'll hold the lamp!"

Aunt Seula was businesslike and the backbone of her family. During the Depression, they left the farm and moved to Murfreesboro where she opened a restaurant on the square. It was small, but did a good business. She was noted for her home-made pies. She would arise before daylight and begin baking. Later, she moved out to East Main Street near the college and operated Lamb's Grill. There is no telling how many free meals she gave away over the years to her family and friends. I loved to go there for her hamburgers. One time, she complained about how

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many hamburgers I had eaten. It didn't set well with Mom. Aunt Seula worked hard making money and liked to spend it. She did a lot of her shopping in Nashville at stores like Harvey's. What she bought—clothes, furniture, cars—were always nice. Never would she spend her money on cheap stuff. I still have a living room suit and some outdoor furniture that once belonged to her and were passed on down to my mother.

Uncle Doris quit school to go work at a young age. Christine, one of his daughters, shared with me the story of her father hiring out with a wagon and team of mules. He would leave home before daylight and get back after dark. They had an old dog whose favorite place was by the fireplace. When he began thumping his tail on the wooden floor as he lay there, they knew Doris was on his way home and Mammy would get up out of her chair and start fixing his supper. They couldn't hear the wagon in the distance, but the old dog did and announced the coming of his master.

Aunt Verlie told me this story of the three youngest girls: She, Grace, and Estelle slept in the same room. Grace was the oldest and Estelle was the youngest. It was winter, and they were ready for bed. Grace started prissing around in front of the fire in the fireplace, playing like she was an actress or something. A red-hot coal had popped out on the hearth which she didn't see. Estelle saw it but said nothing. She just sat and watched and waited. Sure enough, Grace stepped on the hot coal and that ended her make-believe.

When Verlie was very young, she became ill with meningitis and almost died. It left her with her face partially paralyzed and unable to close her eyes. She was concerned about not being as pretty as other girls. Mammy, she said, tried to console her by saying that "true beauty is not on the outside, but on the inside."

I used to hear Mammy talk about the year when there was no summer. This was actually the year 1816. She may not have known it, but it was caused by the eruption of the Tabora volcano in Indonesia in 1815. It claimed ninety-two lives. The enormous cloud it developed spread over much of the earth, lowering temperatures so that snow fell in the United States in June, July and August. She must have heard her grandparents and other older people talking about it when she was a child.

She also spoke of the time when the stars fell from heaven. It was such a terrifying experience that many thought that the world was coming to an end. This was actually a meteoric shower, the most brilliant occurring on Nov. 13, 1833 and again in 1866, right after the Civil War. She probably heard about this from her parents or grandparents.

There were, in the days of my grandparents, some dysfunctional families, alcoholism, and marriage problems, as there are now. Divorce, however, was rare. My grandmother told of times, long after they had gone to bed, that they would be awakened by the drunken songs of a horse-rider coming up the road. They didn't have to guess who it was; they recognized the voice as that of a neighbor and

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relative. My grandfather would turn over and almost in his sleep say, matter-of-factly, "Well, we're going to have company tonight!" Sure enough, in a few minutes, there would be a knock on the door, and the neighbor's wife and children would be standing there with their bed clothes and quilts and pillows. They had come to, escape the abuse of a drunken husband and father. The next morning, they would get up and go home, and nothing more would be heard of it until the next time he came home drunk. I don't know for sure, but I think she was speaking of the same woman when I heard her say, "I don't understand some women. She was beaten up and treated mean by her husband, and then, when he died, she was so grief-stricken, she had to be held back from jumping into the grave with him. I just don't understand that!"

My grandmother always told me, even as a little boy, to never, never hit a girl or a woman. "No matter what she does, no matter if she is mean as a snake, and no matter how mad she may make you," she said, "don't you ever lay a hand on her! You are a male, and she is a female. She is, by nature, weaker than you are. So, don't be a bully and hit a girl!"

My grandfather had serious health problems. He probably had stomach ulcers and suffered from high blood pressure. There was little he could eat, and he was unable to do a lot of physical work. But he could use his brain, and he did. I heard my grandmother say: "Milt could make more money lying flat of his back than what some other men could make working every day all week long." That was a great compliment, I thought, coming from a wife when times were hard and with a house full of children growing up like stair steps. He traded livestock, bought and sold cedar, and thought of other ways to turn a dollar. I found a note that Uncle Doris, who was grown up and married, wrote to my grandmother: "Tell papa I bought them hogs from Mr. Jackson for him; if he wants them \$60.00 & who ever comes, tell them to come tonight."

Mammy was self-conscious about her feet. She had bunions as a result of wearing shoes of the wrong size. While resting in the swing on the front porch or sitting in a yard chair in the shade of the trees, she would often take off her shoes and leave them in the house. But, seeing anyone coming up the drive, "*fiddlesticks*", she would exclaim, and she and my mother would both jump up and run into the house to put on their shoes! I always thought this was funny...and a little strange.

Besides "*fiddlesticks*", there were some other antiquated expressions. For instance, there was "*pshaw*" when she strongly disagreed with something, or "*common*" (meaning unrefined, coarse in manner, vulgar) when referring to those who had little or no morals. Or "*coarse*" which means "of low, common, inferior quality". "*Tacky*" was another word she used often to describe someone's actions or speech. It means "lacking in style or good taste". No one in the family ever wanted to be accused of being "tacky" by Mammy. A woman of loose morals was a "*hussy*". It surprised me that she placed more blame on women than men when it came to acts of

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immorality. When surprised by something or someone, she might be heard to exclaim "tarnation!" "Piddling" was also a word I often heard. Anything "piddling" was something so trifling or trivial as to be without someone's consideration. "Lollygag" was slow or lazy. Another word she often used to describe a person was "gumption". According to her evaluation, some had gumption; others did not. That word was probably handed down from old English, and, according to Webster, it is a colloquial expression meaning "common sense; shrewdness; enterprise; initiative." It is a word which described my grandmother. There is no denying she had plenty of "gumption". Other picturesque expressions were "mad as a hornet" and "You can't get blood out of a turnip!" The Greatest Generation had a language of its own.

I was once asked to describe the Powells with just one word. I immediately replied "*curious*" - meaning strange or odd. I do not mean any disrespect because my mother was a Powell, and that is the way the Powells have always described themselves. And I think they even took a little pride in the fact that they were somewhat "curious". I used to hear my mother and grandmother talk about how curious some of the Powells were-Wallis, Jordan, Verlie, and all the rest. If I did or said anything strange or out of the ordinary, I would be told: "Now, that's the Powell in you!"

From its vantage point, Soapstone Hill has witnessed times of happiness and times of sorrow, times of joy and times of grief and tragedy. Scoby was the youngest son of Dallas and Virginia Powell, my grandfather's youngest brother. His picture hung on the wall of my grandmother's room for years, and I still have it. He was a handsome young man. But he got into trouble - girl trouble. I never heard my folks talk about it much, but, bit-by-bit, I pieced the story together. He got a girl pregnant, and, to escape prosecution or a "shotgun" wedding, his parents sent him to Kentucky to live with an older sister, Seula, who had married Lee Andrews Brothers, a country doctor. It was a common practice in those days to get an erring boy (or girl) away as quickly as possible. Not long after he left home, he became ill with typhoid fever and died. He was brought back to his grieving parents and siblings on a train in a pine box and buried in Powell cemetery.

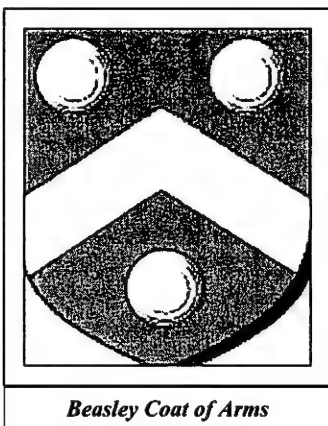
The mortality rate was high in those days. The average age about the turn of the century (20th) was only about fifty. Children often did not survive the first two or three years. Childbearing was risky for both mother and baby due to lack of proper diet and medical help. Midwives substituted for trained doctors. Diseases and injuries often went untreated. When there was a death, neighbors would pitch in to help with the preparation of the body for the burial. Most of the time, there was no embalming, so the burial was not delayed. Visitation was at home. The cemetery was usually in the church yard or on a family plot of ground. The men would dig the grave by hand. The casket was usually a pine box crafted by a local cabinet-maker or carpenter. If there was no undertaker available with a horse-drawn hearse, the body was transported to the gravesite in a farm wagon. There were scary stories circulated

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among the children of people being buried alive and of sounds coming from the grave after the burial. There was also the problem of grave robbers. Selling cadavers was a big business in those days, and so the new grave needed to be guarded for several days. There is the story I once heard of a grave robber who placed the body beside him in the seat of a buggy and drove it to Nashville. Anyone who saw it would have thought it to be a sleeping or intoxicated companion.

The Beasley Bunch

On the other side of the family, there were the Beasleys. It has always been a family tradition that the Beasleys were Scot-Irish. However, when I was in Ireland a number of years ago, I heard of only one Beasley in that country, and he was a professional jockey. In tracing the family tree, I have been able to go only as far back as England. And so let us begin with William Beasley I, the immigrant. He arrived in Virginia in about 1690 and soon became a landowner. His son and grandson were also named William. Skipping several generations, we come to James Beasley who was born about 1780 and moved from North Carolina to Rutherford County, Tennessee where he spent the rest of his life. He was a veteran of the war of 1812, serving six months and being paid \$35.48²³. He was the father of Major Pitts Beasley. (Major was his first name, not a military rank.) He was born about 1812. His son, George Washington Beasley, born in 1836, was a Confederate soldier. He was brought up in the Christiana area and married in 1859 to Tabitha Neely. At one time, he owned a large farm just west of where I was reared facing the railroad. He later sold it and moved back to Christiana. One of his sons was John James Beasley who married his cousin, Bell Bright Beasley. She was a daughter of Bias and Mary Frances Beasley who lived in Georgia. After the death of her mother, her father came to live in Christiana. John James and Bell Bright raised four children, all boys. They were Elmo, Hugh, Charles, and Roy.



Hugh was the oldest. He married Katherine Holden. They owned a small farm but lived in Christiana. They never had any children of their own, but Aunt Katherine "mothered" the younger brothers and their sons. She was a beloved teacher at the Christiana School. Uncle Hugh drove a school bus and was the community's "Mr. Fix-it". One peculiar thing about him was that he was almost oblivious to electric shock. He could have been a human voltage tester. My dad said that, when working on the electric system of a car, he would test for voltage by taking hold of the wire

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and telling whomever was helping him to turn on the ignition or step on the starter! Uncle Hugh died of cancer in 1946. After several years, Aunt Katherine remarried and died in 1956 under some rather mysterious circumstances. I have a 17-jewel pocket watch that once belonged to Uncle Hugh, dated 1913.

Elmo married Roberta Miller of the Millersburg Millers and lived in Christiana. They had one son, Harold, who retired as a Major from the Air Force. He married Virginia Love Woodfin, of the funeral home Woodfins, and served in both the Korean and Viet Nam wars. On a raid in Korea, his plane was hit. Upon returning to his home base, he is reported as saying in his best southern drawl, "Shucks, I didn't know I was hit until I landed!"

Uncle Elmo retired from the railroad where he worked as a conductor and as a station manager.

Charles married Eura Mae Modrall who was a widow with two children. They lived in Christiana and had one son, Charles Anderson, who married Betty Jean Stem. Uncle Charles was a diabetic and had to weigh the food that he as allowed on small scales he carried with him. He had to retire from clerking at a Western Auto store because of his health. However, he bought a pick-up truck and started trading cattle which he thoroughly enjoyed. Charles Anderson started in the grocery business while still in high school and made it his life's work.

Roy, the youngest of the family, married Estelle Powell. And I came along five years later.

The Beasleys of Christiana were close-knit. The boys were supportive of each other and always enjoyed getting together with good food and a lot of banter and joshing. Like most proud fathers, they enjoyed bragging to each other about the accomplishments of their sons.



Roy Beasley, Sr. and Roy, Jr. with Rat and Jack

My grandparents, John James and Belle, had two other children who did not survive: Johnny Mat and Mary Pauline. Dad used to tell how the boys would tease their father about not having sense enough to come in out of the rain. He would go outside the house and watch the gathering clouds and would stay until it started raining and would then run into the house, soaking wet.

Belle Beasley died in 1927 from complications from goiter surgery at St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville. In those days, patients were hospitalized much longer than they are now. Everything seemed to be going well and she was about to be dismissed but died the day before she was to go home. It was devastating to the

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family, my father especially. John James had died in 1926.

My dad quit school at Christiana after the eighth grade, bought a wagon and team, and went to work helping to build the highway between Murfreesboro and Shelbyville, a part of Route 231. One of his jobs was to get the trucks started and warmed up during the winter months. My mother finished grammar school at Fosterville and attended Central High School in Murfreesboro. She and other students commuted by train each day. I used to hear her tell about riding the "Short Dog", which consisted of just the engine, one baggage and mail car, and two passenger cars. It would stop and pick up passengers anywhere along the track. A month's supply of green tickets cost \$4.75. At the age of 16, the price increased to \$8.75. Mr. Charlie Fulton²⁴, the ticket agent, once said that he knew some old-looking 15 year-olds! Mom didn't quite finish High School, however. She chose the MRS degree, instead. I don't think she ever regretted it. I never knew of a more devoted couple than they.

Only Doesn't Mean Lonely

I was a baby who wasn't born. I came into this world by Caesarian Section. This procedure had been around for hundreds of years but was still uncommon. It was a law of the Roman Caesars that a live child must be taken from a dead mother in this way, hence the name 'Caesarian'. Successful Caesarian Sections did not come about until the sixteenth century. Mammy once told me about a lady who said, "I want to see that baby who wasn't born!" Mom was unable to have more children; thus, I was a singleton. I was an "only" but not "lonely". I had plenty of cousins and neighborhood friends, many of whom were almost like brothers and sisters. Like siblings, those childhood associations influenced my life, helping to make me what I am today.

Myths about singletons abound, but studies have concluded that they are "myth-stakes". (Pardon the pun). They are often stereotyped as spoiled, withdrawn and social misfits. However, Toni Falco, a social psychologist of the University of Texas at Austin, devoted thirty years in the study of singletons and concluded that the majority of them, through association with other children, turn out just fine²⁵. Thanks, Toni, for helping me clear our name.

CHAPTER IV

BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER

*"Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son,
and children shall rise up against their parents..." (Mk. 13:12 KJV)*

The Civil war has been described as "Brother Against Brother". That was true of Tennessee. East Tennessee was mostly Unionists. Shelbyville, in Middle Tennessee, had many Union sympathizers, but other parts of Bedford County were strongly Confederate. Families were divided. Neighbor against neighbor. Friends alienated. In his poem, "Old Fosterville", William Moore told of his boyhood friends, one in blue and the others in gray. It was a difficult time for those who lived in both the North and the South, and it took many decades to recover.

Invasion of Tennessee

The war was not going well for the North. Lincoln was desperate to show some victories, and so attention was shifted from the east to the western front, including Tennessee. In 1862, General Ulysses S. Grant, with headquarters at Cairo, Ill., seized Fort Henry on the Tennessee River and then, using gunboats, attacked Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River. Without much of the fight, the Confederates surrendered. When the commander of the fort requested terms of surrender, Grant replied: "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted." Nathan Bedford Forrest did not agree with the decision to surrender, and he and his cavalry barely escaped capture as they made a forced march in the night to Nashville. But, Grant also had his eye on Nashville and started moving down the Cumberland River toward the city. The Confederates began to evacuate, burning the supplies that they could not carry with them. The citizens of Nashville were terribly alarmed. Those who could, fled the city. Those who had no place to go remained. The Union Army approached the river through East Nashville. The bridge had been burned out. The mayor and other citizens crossed the river and surrendered the city. This proved to be a tremendous moral boost for the North and brought Grant into the limelight that led finally to his Presidency.

The Battle of Fosterville

It is the last day of 1862 and New Year's Day, 1863, and YOU ARE THERE. Standing on the top of Soapstone, you can see the smoke stacks of Murfreesboro and witness one of the greatest battles of the Civil War. At least you can hear the noise of

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cannons firing in one continuous roar. You can see smoke rising, as the smoke of a great furnace. It was the battle of Stones River. The Union forces were led by Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans. Soapstone and the surrounding hills drain into Bailey's Creek that flows into Dry Fork Creek and into Stones River. It is said that Stones River ran in blood. Soon after the battle, General Braxton Bragg's Confederate troops could have been observed retreating down the turnpike past Fosterville to occupy Shelbyville and to dig in along Highland Rim between Shelbyville, Tullahoma, and Manchester. A few months later, on June 24th through the 27th, one could have witnessed the movements of both the Confederate and Union troops around Fosterville. It is said that they were thick as fleas on a dog's back. There were camps and pickets set up all along the Bell Buckle Road and the railroad. Joey Woodruff, who has lived in the area all his life and has done extensive research on the battle of Fosterville, gives this account of how it began²⁶:

"A Yankee soldier fired upon a Confederate soldier late one evening. The Confederate soldier stood on the road near the south edge of the present property of the Fosterville Church of Christ and fired back toward the flash from the Yankee's rifle. It was a "shot in the dark", but it hit its mark. The next day, the body of the Union soldier was found just north of the Benjamin Thomas house" (later the home of Dwight Jarman, another Soapstone neighbor).

James A. Garfield

During the occupation of Murfreesboro by the Union Army, there was a young officer who was General Rosecrans' Chief-of-Staff. His name was Col. James A. Garfield, who later became our 20th President in 1881. He had reached the rank of General during the war and then served as a Congressman from Ohio. Before the war, he had been an educator and a gospel preacher. Garfield was invited to participate in the worship service at the East Main church of Christ. George W. DeHoff, a former minister of the church, once interviewed a Mrs. Johnson who, as a child, sat with other children on a pew just behind Garfield. She said that when he got up to preach or to preside at the Lord's Table, he would remove his saber and side arms, leaving them in the pew. She added that "the children enjoyed his singing". They considered themselves brethren in Christ in spite of political division within the nation. Garfield presented a communion service to the church consisting of a covered eighteen-inch-high pewter wine container and two goblets. There were some who objected to accepting a "Yankee gift". However, a Confederate veteran in the congregation took the stand that "all Christians can worship together"²⁷. To me, this is remarkable. Although on opposing sides politically and the presence of the Union soldiers viewed as an army of occupation, they still considered themselves brethren in Christ. This shows the strength of spiritual "ties that bind". It is not unreasonable to assume that Garfield was with Rosecrans later in the battle of Fosterville. Perhaps

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he was even a guest of Rosecrans in the home of Thomas Edwards.

Garfield was serving as an elder in the church when he became President. He made the statement that he was "stepping down from the eldership to become President of the United States." That statement showed the esteem he had for the Lord's church and the God-ordained eldership.

While in the White House, you would probably expect a President to attend some prestigious denomination where the rich and famous were to be found and to be seen by a host of people. Not so with the Garfield family. They attended a small out-of-the-way congregation, meeting in a modest white frame building. It is said that each Sunday morning, a carriage was drawn up in front of the President's residence to convey the family to worship. Garfield was still a preacher at heart. Old habits are hard to break. He would circulate among the congregation, greeting visitors and members, inquiring about the health of family members, expressing his concern. It is said that, one time, there was a crisis and the President's advisors and others planned an emergency session on Sunday morning. When they approached the President, he promptly told them that he could not attend on Sunday morning because he had a prior engagement. They could not understand that there could be anything more important than that meeting in a time of national crisis. He informed them that he had an appointment with his Lord around the Lord's Table, and the other could wait. He attended worship as usual, and the crisis was soon over.

An assassin stalked the President. His name was Charles J. Guiteau, a disappointed office-seeker. He followed the President and his family to church, staying outside and looking through the window for an opportune moment to fire his weapon. Nothing happened. As he later testified, he could not get a clear shot for the crowd and was afraid of hitting someone else. He later was successful, however. He shot the President on July 2, 1881 at the train depot as Garfield was about to leave Washington on a short trip.

Courthouse Raid

The Rutherford County courthouse in Murfreesboro, with its domed top and four clocks facing four directions, is basically the same one that was there during the Civil war. For many years, bullet holes were visible in the walls. These holes have an interesting story behind them. The courthouse was used by Union troops as a prison. It was learned that a number of citizens of Murfreesboro who were held there were to be executed the next day. General Nathan Bedford Forrest led an all-night march from McMinnville to attempt a rescue. They stopped at Readyville in the early morning hours where the residents served them breakfast. They entered Murfreesboro and approached the courthouse, coming down East Main Street. The courthouse was full of Federal soldiers who opened fire on them. The Confederates, however, went in and captured every one of them and released the prisoners. This

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story was related by one of the Confederate soldiers who participated in the raid, Mr. James F. Knox of Bell Buckle²⁸.

The Battle of Liberty Gap

Finally, after several months of coaxing and even threats from the President, Abraham Lincoln, and his Secretary of War, Stanton, Rosecrans was ready to begin moving his troops south in pursuit of Bragg's army. It was in June 1863, and it rained for several days. The roads were almost impassable. Fifty men were assigned to each wagon to help them up the hills. The summit of Soapstone was probably hidden in a mist. But it still may have been possible to see from there the blue-clad troops moving south from Murfreesboro along the turnpike and other routes leading through four gaps in the hills²⁹. There was Guy's Gap on the turnpike, the N&C Railroad gap, Liberty Gap, and Hoover's Gap. I can imagine thousands of soldiers marching through with their drums beating, bugles blaring, and banners flying. Caissons and cannons rolled by and long trains of supply wagons pulled by horses and mules following the troops into battle. The Confederates were waiting for them on the Rim. There were other routes they took, but many would have passed within sight of Soapstone. Some would have gone eastward along the old Liberty Gap Road which led from the village of Fosterville, over the hill to a very small church and community by that name. Others converged down the Bell Buckle (Short Creek) Road. In this narrow gap in the hills, the battle was fought. Farther east at Hoover's Gap, on the road between Murfreesboro and Manchester, another battle was fought at the same time³⁰. One would have no difficulty in hearing these battles from the top of Soapstone. Years ago, a very old lady, Aunt Cassie Morris, who lived all her life in the New Hermon community near Shelbyville, told me of hearing cannons firing when she was a child. This was probably the battles of Liberty Gap and Hoover's Gap that she heard.

This was a shrewd move on the part of General Rosecrans, and the Confederates were caught by surprise. Bragg's line of defense extended along Highland Rim from near Manchester to Shelbyville. He was counting on the hills between his position and Murfreesboro to form a natural barrier and a shield from attack from that direction. He expected Rosecrans to attack from the northwest of Shelbyville, and that is where he had placed most of his defenses. The rest of the line eastward was not adequately defended. The attack was fierce. Vastly outnumbered, the Confederates gave up and retreated to Tullahoma. Soon, they withdrew to Chattanooga and then on into Georgia. Both armies lived off the land they occupied. But the Union troops were the most aggressive. They sent out foraging parties that took whatever they could use. Anne Powell, my great, great-grandmother and the widow of John, gave her grandchildren an account of the battle of Liberty Gap which was fought nearby³¹. She said that it was almost a daily occurrence for Union soldiers

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to come and, using their bayonets, tear up the feather mattresses looking for hidden Confederate soldiers or anything else that might have been hidden.

Joseph Woodruff has pointed out to me the location of a cave where some residents hid their horses from the Union army. It is located on the old Elam farm within a half of a mile from where I was reared. It was, however, filled in many years ago. He also pointed out the location of the nearby camps of both the Union and Confederate armies and a grave of a Union soldier. Times were hard for the folks of Fosterville and throughout the whole vicinity.

In gathering supplies from the civilians, the Union troops showed no respect for anyone, even Union sympathizers. Near Jasper, Tennessee, in the Sequatchie Valley, there lived the family of I. G. Kelly. They had "Protection Papers" signed by General Rosecrans himself, but that made no difference to the foraging party. They loaded up all the ear corn he had in his crib except for about twenty-five bushels. This reduced the Kelly family to poverty. Twenty-five bushels of ear corn would only produce a fraction of that amount when shelled. This would not be nearly enough to feed a family of four throughout the winter, much less the animals. If this was the way the Union army treated those who were considered "loyal", how do you suppose they treated the other citizens?³² You can be certain that those who lived in the vicinity of Soapstone fared no better.

In the 1930's, my father was chopping down a large tree on our property when he dulled his axe on a mini-ball embedded deep inside. Numerous cannon balls have also been found in the area. The Christiana church of Christ was, at that time, located on the Shelbyville Turnpike. The present congregation still uses the pulpit with a hole made by a mini-ball in the top of it, indicating that it must have been lying flat on the floor or outside the building on the ground when the shot was fired. To the south, near Bell Buckle, is the abandoned Church of Christ building at Cross Roads (circa 1834) which served as a prison for captured northern soldiers. Several holes made by mini-balls have been found in the sides of the old building. Just west of Fosterville is the old home of Thomas Edwards where General Rosecrans and his wife took residence briefly. Elvira Brothers who grew up there wrote: "They occupied the front room on the left as one enters the front door"³³. Oh, if that old house could talk! What stories it could tell!

The N&C Railroad was an important link for the Union Army as it pushed Southeast toward Chattanooga. It was constantly attacked by Confederate cavalry under the command of Nathan Bedford Forrest and by guerillas who operated behind the enemy lines. Some guerillas were nothing more than "bushwhackers", outlaws operating on their own, stealing whatever they could lay their hands on for their own use, even from their own people. Thus, there was a heavy concentration of troops to guard the railroad all along the route. They could, no doubt, have been seen for many miles up and down the line from Soapstone Hill. This unit was under the command of Maj. Gen. Robert Milroy, the Provost Marshall, stationed at Tullahoma³⁴. He

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followed a strict "blood and fire" policy, which met resistance with harsh penalties, not only for the perpetrators, but also for those suspected of aiding them³⁵. Some were imprisoned and even put to death on the basis of suspicion alone rather than concrete evidence. Some were entirely innocent of the charges against them but had little or no opportunity to defend themselves before a court of law. Fear tactics didn't work, however. It only resulted in more hatred and determined guerilla attacks. Before the end of the war, the railroad became run-down, and the wood-burning engines and rolling stock worn out.

Pvt. James E. Wallis, Confederate Soldier

My grandmother's father, James E. Wallis, served in the Civil War, and I never tired of listening to the stories of what her father experienced during the war. He had been born and raised in Alabama but had moved to Bedford County, Tennessee while still young. When the war started, the Governor of Tennessee called for 75,000 volunteers. Emotions ran high, and many of his friends were volunteering. He was plowing the day he made up his mind to enlist. He hitched his team to a fence at the end of the row and away he went. He joined Martin's 23rd Regiment, Tennessee Infantry. This Regiment was organized at Camp Trousdale in Sumner County, Tennessee in August 1861 and was destined to see much action. It participated in the battle of Shiloh where Col. Martin was wounded. In Kentucky, they fought battles at Munfordsville and Perryville. In 1863, the 23rd Regiment was consolidated with the 17th Regiment. There were the battles of Murfreesboro, Liberty Gap, and Chickamauga. After that, they were ordered to Knoxville where they fought several battles. From there, they were sent to Virginia to help defend Richmond. They fought in the trenches of Petersburg, retreated and were present at Appomattox Courthouse when General Lee surrendered to General Grant. How many of these battles my great-grandfather participated in, I do not know. Undoubtedly, several. His Regiment fought well, but suffered heavy losses. There were only 4 officers and 52 men of this Regiment present at the surrender.

Searching for information about my great-grandfather's experiences during the Civil War, I came across the memoirs of W. C. Brown who was a member of the same regiment. Mr. Brown had moved with his father and mother from New Market, Alabama to Unionville, Bedford County, Tennessee. My great-grandfather had also moved from Alabama to Bedford County. I am sure that they must have shared together many of the same war experiences. Here is Mr. Brown's story³⁶:

On July 13, 1861 the Company was sent to Murfreesboro, Tennessee at Camp Anderson where we drilled for several months, where the 23 and 24 Regiments was formed. I being a member of Company F23 Tenn. Inf. In September 1861, we moved to Camp Trousdale, KY. In November,

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moved to Bolling Green, KY where we fortified that City with many fine forts which is still standing today. Done no fighting in that place. After Fort Donelson fell in the hands of the Federal Soldiers, we retreated to Nashville, Tenn., leaving Bolling Green, Ky. On the 14th day of February, 1862, burning many supplies rather than have them fall in the hands of the enemy. The 14th day of February being our first days March. The ground was covered with snow as it snowed the night before. Was the hardest day of my life. Didn't go into camp until night. Weather was very cold; no tents and how we suffered from cold. We reached Nashville the latter part of the Month terribly worn out. After a short stay, were sent to Huntsville, Ala., where we remained a few days. Took up our line of March for Tuscombria, Ala., where we drilled until the last of March, 1862. We then moved to Corinth, Miss. After remaining there a few days we moved to Shiloh, 30 miles from Corinth where we met the federal forces. Our cavalry engaged in several small battles and on the 6th, a bright Sunday morning, our army made the attack. We drove them from their position. My Brigade was commanded by General Pat Claiborne in Gen. Cheatam's Division. Hardee's Corps made the drive through their Camp, where I received two wounds on the left side and through the left arm; So I was out for 45 days. Went to the Country and did not go to the Hospital. Had to walk back to Corinth through the rain and mud. My wounds were dressed the third day after I got to Corinth by Dr. J. A. Landis, one of our City Doctors who is buried in Gainesville, Texas. We were school-mates before the war. After the battle of Shiloh, our army returned to Cornith where we reorganized and volunteered for two years more as we first volunteered for one year. We elected a new set of Officers, J. P. Lytle being elected Captain, Don Stallings, First Lieutenant, A. M. Winsett, Second Lieutenant. The old Officers retired and returned home. We moved from Corinth in May to Tupelo, Miss. Camped there for the Summer, 1862. In the fall of that year, we moved by the way of Mobile, Ala. to Montgomery by boat. Shipped by rail to Chattanooga, Tenn. Camped there for a short time across the river on Walden's Ridge. In the fall, made a raid in Ky., fought the battle of Perryville, Ky. I was left on detail at Chattanooga. Joined the Army after they came back at Estelle Springs in Middle Tenn. That was the only battle I missed. We camped that fall near Shelbyville in 1862. Fought the Battle of Murfreesboro on Dec. 31-62-Jan. 1-63. The weather was very cold and we suffered great agony as we had no tents. After that battle, we went into Camp at Tullahoma, Tenn. for the winter. In the Spring of 1863, the army moved us to Bedford County, Tenn. My home County, but soon left for East Tenn. Part of my Brigade camped at Calhoun and

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Charleston, Tenn. On September the 18th, 19th, and 20th, we fought the Battle of Chicamauga. On the night of the 19th, we had a heavy frost and how we suffered from the cold. As we were facing the enemy, could not have any fire. A very hard fought battle as your History tells you. On Sunday evening on Snod Grass Hill we fought fresh troops; it being our 3rd day without relief. It was charge and charge. Finally, we drove them after dark into Chattanooga. We were worn out for sleep and food. I think it was one of the hardest fought battles of the war. The present generation does not know what it is to be without food or sleep. Our army remained there until the Battle of Missionary Ridge was fought in November. I was not in this Battle. General Longstreet was sent to Knoxville, Tenn. to attack Gen. Burnside's of the Federal Army. He had him surrounded in the City. My division was sent from the Ridge to reinforce him. Bush Rod Johnson's Ten. Brig. And Gen. Gracy's Ala. Brig. got there a short time before Gen. Bragg was defeated. The federals sent a force of troops up the Valley to Knoxville, when we were compelled to go into East Tenn. for the winter of 1863 and 1864 where we suffered for clothes and shoes and food. Many days, 2 ears of corn was a days ration. Our feet were tied in rags. We were without tents or wagons to haul our cooking utensils and had to carry everything we used and had to take the weather as it came. On May 2, we left Tenn. for Richmond, Va. It was snowing to beat the band, and I well remember we got to Richmond about the 8th. The hardest looking bunch of men you ever saw, but as brave as could be. We marched up to the Capitol for President Davis and our Congressmen to see us next day. They sent us clothes and how we did strut when we got all dressed up but not long. We had to go into battle the next day in that month, May, 1864. We fought the Battle of Swift Creek, May 5, Walthall Junction May 6th, Bermuda Hundred, May 18th, and Drury Bluff, May 26th. This Battle was between Richmond and Petersburg, just 22 miles apart. Gen. Lee was fighting the Battle of the Wilderness when we reached Richmond, just in time to save the two cities. On June the 15th, we were ordered to Petersburg and were just 11 miles away. Gen. Grant was making for Richmond and Petersburg. Gen. Hancock's Division of 15,000 troops had gotten to Petersburg and taken the outer works. We got there with 2,000 troops in the night between the Yanks and the City. We made rifle pits and quick as possible, skirmishing through the day until just before night. They charged us with 15,000 troops against 2,000. Gen. Buckner was our Commander and were fighting 15 men to our 2. We fought them two days and nights, without anything to eat or sleep. We held them off until Gen. Lee came in on Saturday morning, June 18th, about 3:00 o'clock that

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morning and after they quit charging us, we fell back to the main line where we had hundreds of negroes building Brest works. I never saw such a slaughter during my war experience. They couldn't use cannons without killing their own men. We had 20 pieces of artillery along our line, using double charge of canister shot. Their loss was between 10,000 and 11,000 men. We lost few men. We were a hard looking bunch of boys the morning of the 18th, with sunken eyes and cheeks, black faces, but the good women and children in the City cooked for us. They sent us a breakfast that morning, I shall never forget. Made coffee by 60 gal. Barrels. We surely did enjoy it. I can almost taste it yet. Now for the siege of both cities. Our lines had to take in both Cities, 50 miles in length. Then we were 10 months under shell and shot with no relief. So on the morning of the 2nd of April, Sunday Morning, Gen. Grant attacked Gen. Lee who had 40,000 troops in our lines, he came against us with 140,000 at daylight. Soon broke our lines and we retreated as history tells you as far as Appomattox, about 100 miles from Richmond. On Sunday morning the 9th, we had to surrender. My, how we did hate to do that. Gen. Meade asked Gen. Lee how many troops he had in line when they broke our line that morning; he answered 40,000. Gen. Meade said to him, I am astonished Gen. Lee, but knowing you as I do, I believe what you say. Gen. Lee served under Meade as a Colonel in the Mexican war. Gen. Grant sent an officer to see how many available troops we had, he came back and reported 8,000 men and 120 cannons. Gen. Grant said, we can't fire any salutes on this surrender. Now we Tennessee boys had a long journey before us. We left on the morning of April 13 for our homes. They gave us 2 days rations. All they would give us on the long march of 600 miles as there was very little in the country to get. Just before we got out of Virginia, I and another Comrade killed a 3 year old steer. We camped near a farm house to get fire. If we had anything to cook, we got his wash kettles and cooked the beef that night. We ate him without salt or bread. My, what fine eating we had. I arrived home on the morning of April 30, Sunday morning. How glad my mother, father, sisters, and brothers and my sweetheart were to see me. We talked all night Saturday night. Found our country in bad shape, but we were game and went to work to re-build again. Our brave men and women have accomplished so much.

My great-grandfather Wallis may have been one of Mr. Brown's companions. Regardless whether he was or not, he suffered the same hardships. He, too, walked a long way home after the war. He didn't have much food. He and his companions

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killed a pig and roasted it on a burning brush pile. They allowed it to crust over and then ate it until the juice began to ooze out. Then they would throw it back on the fire to crust over again. He said that was the best eats he ever had.

He also told of an early, unexpected snowfall. One night, while they were camped after marching all day long, he woke up covered in several inches of fresh snow. He rose up from his blankets and looked around. He couldn't see a living soul. All were covered with a blanket of snow. He told of the hunger and cold they suffered. There were not enough tents and blankets. Their clothes were worn out and they had no shoes. They wrapped their feet in rags and left bloody footprints on the frozen ground. Once, he climbed a hill to watch a battle on the other side. He reached the top and squatted down thinking that he couldn't be seen, but he was seen. He became a target, the mini ball whizzing between his legs! He wasted no time getting off that hill and out of sight! I have often wondered if that might have been the battle of Liberty Gap near Soapstone.

George Washington, AWOL

George Washington BEASLEY, that is. George Washington (Wash) Beasley also served in the Confederate army. He enlisted for three years as a Private in Company E, 45th Regiment, Tennessee Infantry. He fought under Lt. General Hardee in the battle of Stones River. After the army withdrew to the Chattanooga area, he was listed as a deserter. This was not unusual for, often, soldiers would go home at harvest time, visit their families, and later return to duty. However, both armies had clamped down on this practice and were beginning to court marshal and punish deserters by the firing squad. But Wash was lucky. He was captured by the Union army on September 12, 1863 near Chattanooga at Graysville, GA and sent to prison near Stevenson, Alabama. He missed the bloody battle of Chickamauga. He took the oath of the allegiance to the United States and was allowed to return home³⁶.

Before the war, Wash lived in the Walter Hill area in northern Rutherford County where he was an overseer on a plantation. According to my father, when Wash had to discipline a slave, he would take him into the barn or some other out-building and shut the door. He told the slave that when he hit a bail of cotton or a sack of corn with his stick or whip, he was to holler as loud as he could, so the others would think he was really getting a thrashing.

Wash and Tabitha had ten children. One of them was John James Beasley, my grandfather. They lived a few years on a farm northwest of Soapstone next to the railroad before moving back to Christiana.

Joseph (Joey) Woodruff tells the story of Major Hugh Neely in his book *When Houses Talked*³⁷. Major was his name, not a military rank. In fact, he did all he could to stay out of the army-either army. He had a family to support. They lived near the turnpike. When he heard Union soldiers coming down Lee's Knob, he would run into

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the house and jump into bed to play sick. The soldiers were taking all the able-bodied men they could by conscription. Finding him sick, they rode on. However, one day, while he was chopping wood, some Confederate soldiers rode up without him hearing them. They demanded that he mount an extra horse they were leading and go with them. They took him down the Middletown (Midland) road and then stopped for some target shooting. The target was an old rag tied to a cedar pole. The sergeant stood near the pole to call the shots. When it came Neely's turn, he aimed directly at the sergeant. The sergeant stopped him from shooting with some choice vocabulary not found in the dictionary. He tried a second and third time and the same thing happened. The exasperated sergeant ran up to him angrily, wanting to know what kind of trick he was playing. It was then that he saw that Hugh Neely was cross-eyed! He was allowed to take the horse and go home. Joey says that Mr. Neely never again had to play sick.

Some of Wheeler's Confederate cavalry were helping to guard the turnpike near Fosterville. They saw a larger force of enemy cavalry approaching and withdrew to Guy's Gap near Deason. Suspecting a flanking movement to their left, the commanding officer rode off to investigate but was almost captured and did not return. As the enemy drew nearer, Thomas H. Malone, an officer, went in search of his commanding officer and was captured himself. He rode back to his men as fast as he could but they had already withdrawn. He was going in pursuit to rejoin them when he heard from behind a voice that called out, "Surrender, you Rebel coward" (with other opprobrious epithets). He wheeled his horse around to face his challenger, and said, "Come and take me, you...Yankee!" The Union officer then proceeded to shoot a hole through his hat. His returned fire struck the Union officer in the chest, and he rode on. Many years later, he was relieved to learn by sheer chance the Union officer's name and that he had survived from the wound.³⁸

The war ended with the defeat of the Confederacy and the "Reconstruction" period began. It was a difficult time for southerners. The South lay in ruins. Contrary to the wishes of Abraham Lincoln, many in Washington, including the new President and former military governor of Tennessee, Andrew Johnson, were set on revenge against those states that seceded. Times were desperate.

This was when the Ku Klux Klan was organized. It was organized in Pulaski, Tennessee, and was first under the leadership of Civil War hero, Nathan Bedford Forrest who was born in Chapel Hill, Tennessee. Great-grandfather Wallis rode for a while with the Klan. In those days, the Klan did not have the connotation that it does now. There was little law and order in the South. Everything was in chaos and turmoil. Violence and lawlessness was a common occurrence. There was the invasion of carpetbaggers and scallywags along with the bluecoat occupation forces. There were bushwhackers and people, both blacks and whites, who took whatever they could get. The Klan proved to be not the answer, but decent citizens were desperate that something be done. When the Klan itself became more violent and infiltrated

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thugs and hoodlums and Forrest saw it was going in the wrong direction, he resigned. That was probably when my great-grandfather left it, too.

The military governors ruled with an iron fist. There wasn't much justice to be found. Families were left impoverished. Those who served in the Confederate army returned home to find themselves disenfranchised. They were second-rate citizens in their own country. The roads and turnpikes leading north were clogged with black families who had been freed from one kind of slavery only to find themselves bound by another kind. They found themselves free but with no way to earn a living. Southerners were broke and the Northerners had no inclination to feed them. Lawlessness was ramped. White citizens were turned out of their homes. Some died of starvation and exposure. There was still ill-feeling between the so-called rebels and the pro-unionists, and it took generations for these old wounds to heal. Many of the blacks, however, considered themselves Southerners and resented Northern intrusion. Some went with their owners into war. After the war, they looked upon their masters' families as their own and did not want to leave. The slaves belonging to James Elam wanted to stay, and so did the slaves of Edward Thomas. Mr. Thomas told his slaves that he did not have much money, but he could provide food and shelter and that they were welcome to stay on as long as they wished.

To set the record straight, it should be pointed out that the Civil War was not fought for the freeing of the slaves. It was fought over states' rights. Lincoln's *Emancipation Proclamation* was given shortly before the war ended, and it was for the purpose of bolstering a sagging will on the part of many influential northerners to continue fighting. This appealed especially to the abolitionists. For the most part, the North did not prove to be a real friend to the ex-slaves. In Sherman's destructive "March to the Sea", many slaves fled the plantations and followed the Union army whom they considered their friends and saviors. But they were either sent back to their masters or simply ignored. They received no help or encouragement from them. Many did not survive.

The war of "Brother Against Brother" was tragic and a national disgrace. It was unfortunate and uncalled for. There was no compelling rhyme or reason for it. It was politically motivated. There were differences, but there were other ways to solve those problems without resorting to war. It was a "rich man's war and a poor man's fight". There is no doubt that the southerners outfought the North and had better leadership. Had it not been for the dogged determination of Abe Lincoln, the North would have negotiated peace. This is what the South was counting on. President Jeff Davis and other Southern leaders were expecting the European countries to recognize the Confederacy. This would have forced the North to end the fighting. But this did not happen. The South simply ran out of man-power and the necessary materials to carry on. But it all turned out to be a blessing. Thankfully, the Union was preserved and old wounds healed, although it took generations for this to happen. Instead of two North American countries, there is just one country made up of a union of 50

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states. This concept has proved itself to the world. The United States has grown to become the greatest nation on the face of the earth.

Great-grandfather Wallis returned home to Bedford County to find the country in shambles. He married and started a family. He was basically a farmer but probably held down several other jobs to support his growing family. One job was driving a freight wagon. On his way to Tullahoma or Winchester, the road was rough and narrow. One day, he saw what he thought was a rail from a fence laying across the trail. He stopped his team and got down from the wagon to move the rail out of the road, but it wasn't a rail! It was a snake! It was the biggest snake he had ever seen! He jumped back on his wagon and got out of there as fast as he could. It is thought that it was probably a Python that had escaped from a circus that was passing through.

My grandmother's family, including her father and brothers and sisters, moved to Oklahoma and Texas in the late 1890's. Oklahoma had been Indian Territory but was opened up for settlement not long before the Wallis family went there. Although they corresponded, my grandmother did not see any of her family again until 1943 when Aunt Alvie and Uncle Willie came for a visit. Later, my grandmother visited them in Oklahoma, going there by train. On her way there, while changing trains in Memphis, she suffered a mild stroke which affected her speech. She was unable to talk, and she was frightened. She approached a nicely-dressed man at the train depot to ask him for help for she was sick. He could not understand her. He probably thought she was a foreigner who did not know English. Anyway, he reached into his pocket and offered her some money. In frustration, she hauled off and slapped him in the face. How astonished he must have been. Somehow, though, she located the right train and resumed her journey. Sitting next to the window of the train and looking out, she practiced forming her words until she was able to communicate fairly well. By the time she returned home, she was almost fully recovered.

Mammy was privileged to visit with her brothers and sisters, but she never saw her father again after he left to go West. He died in the 1920's. I have a small box of some of his effects, including two plugs of chewing-tobacco. Not long before his death, he sent a Christmas greeting to my grandmother, dated December 23, 1925 and wrote in a small but steady hand in legible script:

To my affectionate daughter & all. This is to inform you that I have not forgotten any of you yet, and I am sure I never will as long as I remain in my usually good mind & I hope I will keep it as long as I live. Enclosed find \$10 for which you & family will please accept as a present from your father and grandfather. ~ J. E. Wallis

CHAPTER V

AS THE CENTURY TURNS

*What a new century brings to us will depend greatly
upon what we bring to the new century – Selected*

While there was wild celebration on New Years Eve 1900 in the big cities and even small ones, I venture to say that the majority of folks around Soapstone Hill were in bed early, resting up for another hard day's work from sun-up to sun-down as usual on New Years Day. To most of them, it was just another day. If the generation that fought WWII was indeed the "Greatest Generation" as Tom Brokaw claims, exploring the previous generations will help us to understand the reason for it.

Milt and Madge Powell belonged to the brave generation that stepped from the nineteenth into the twentieth century. They were a young couple with a growing family. From what I remember having been told, they lived in two or three houses in the immediate vicinity of Soapstone Hill, but, at this time, they were living in a "dogtrot" log house, the first house on the left after passing the home place. From time to time, the young mother could, no doubt, be seen walking along the dusty road to visit her in-laws, the Dallas Powells, or some other relative or friend. She would have her favorite homemade sunbonnet and apron on, carrying a baby with three other little ones in tow. This was probably not often, as she would have plenty of work to keep her busy at home. But she was used to hard work. Her mother had died while she was in her early teens and she kept the house for her father and looked after her younger siblings. She must have felt lonely and maybe almost abandoned after the whole Wallis family moved to far-away Texas and Oklahoma. These were difficult years. Talking to Aunt Verlie, she felt that Pappy was a too-strict disciplinarian with his children, especially the girls. She related an incident when she and Aunt Grace were punished because they did not get back home when they were expected. They had been caught in a shower of rain and stopped off at a neighbor's house. My mother said that he would not allow the girls to sing "I've Been Working on the Railroad". Supposedly, he thought it was a form of lying. Or maybe it was because railroad gangs did not have a good reputation because of drinking, gambling, and fighting. He had his peculiarities. But there is no doubt that both parents loved their children and were seeking their welfare. They had their problems like every family, but it was evidently a reasonably happy home.

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Life at the Turn of the Century

What was it like to live in rural America at the turn of the century? John W. Dobbs says that "Life on the farm in the first year of the twentieth century was more like 1860 than 1940." About 60% lived on farms and in small towns. Farmers were largely self-sufficient. They raised practically everything they consumed and only bought staples from the country store. In the wintertime, they were drifted with snow, bogged with mud in the spring, and clouded with choking dust in the summer. There was no indoor plumbing. The path to the outhouse was well worn. The kitchen served as the bathroom where water was heated on the wood-burning stove and Saturday night baths were taken in a washtub that was also used on Mondays for laundering. Children usually entertained themselves and played games under the watchful eye of the mother. They did their homework around the kitchen table. They always enjoyed going to the store and, for pennies, buying jawbreakers or strips of licorice. Besides the family Bible, there was, in most every home, a Sears Roebuck catalog. The big "wish book" came once a year in the mail, and there would almost be a fight over who had it first. The old one would usually end up in the outhouse.

The county fair was always a big event. There were exhibitions of horses, cattle, chickens, and pigs. There were hog-calling and greased pig contests. Adults and children would enjoy rope-pulling and three-legged races. For the ladies, there would be prize-winning pies and canned fruits and vegetables. For entertainment, there would be horse and mule races, country music, and plenty of popcorn and soda pop. Hamburgers and hot dogs were available. There were also the rides on the merry-go-round and Ferris wheel. There were sideshows featuring the bearded lady or a two-headed snake. Parents usually inspected these shows before allowing the children to attend.

At the turn of the century, you could get an oak well bucket for .36 cents, a potbelly stove for \$2.40, a kitchen range for \$7.00, a five-pound tub of apple butter for .40 cents, a five-gallon jug of maple syrup for .67 cents, and a set of Encyclopedia Britannica for just \$29.50. However, the average hourly wage in industry in those days was only .29 cents. Farm laborers received \$1.00 a day or less.

In other parts of the world, important things were happening-events that would affect the rest of the world, even folks who lived around Soapstone. The Spanish-American War had been fought and won within only four months in 1898. Some of our men served in that war. The United States was rapidly becoming industrialized and recognized in Europe and elsewhere as a world power. Following is a chronology of some headlines that our forefathers might have read in their newspapers:

Extra, Extra, Read All About It!

- 1900: "Deadly Hurricane and Tidal Wave Hits Galveston" 6,000 killed

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in Texas.

- **1901: "William McKinley Assassinated: Teddy Roosevelt Takes Oath of Office"** This was during the World's Fair. Some soldiers captured and began to beat Leon Czolgsz, the assassin, but McKinley said, "Go easy on him, boys," Then he said, in a weak voice to his secretary, "Let no one hurt him." It was hopeful at first that McKinley would survive, but within a week, he was dead.
- **1903: "The Flyer Flies!"** Skeptics were saying, "If God had intended for man to fly, He would have given him wings." But, the Wright brothers were right. They proved the naysayers wrong. The first flight of a heavier-than-air machine took place on December 17, 1903 at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The *Flyer*, with a coughing, sputtering, smoky engine, lifted from the ground at about thirty miles per hour, rose about ten feet, and was airborne for twenty-one seconds. This ushered in the age of heavier-than-air flight.
- **"Wireless Message Spans Atlantic"** This was on January 19, 1903, marking the first regular transatlantic radio broadcast between the United States and England.
- **"Henry Ford Forms Ford Motors"** June 16, 1903, Detroit Michigan.
- **1906: "San Francisco Devastated"** An earthquake and fire on April 19 claimed the lives of three thousand.
- **1908 "Ford Introduces Automobile"** This was the famed Model "T", described by Henry Ford as "the first universal cheap car".
- **"1912 Titanic Sinks!"** The "unsinkable" Titanic sank while on her maiden voyage from England to the United States after striking an iceberg off the coast of Halifax, Nova Scotia, with a loss of 1, 503 of the 2, 200 passengers. There were not enough lifeboats.
- **"Remembering Mother"** On May 7, Mother's Day was established by Congress.
- **"Bloody Battle at Verdum"** This battle began on February 21 and was the start of WWI.
- **1914: "Germans Sink Lusitania"** The American people were outraged by the sinking of the luxury liner Lusitania on the 7th of May off the coast of Ireland by a German U-Boat with the loss of 1,198 persons, including 128 Americans. This eventually helped to lead the United States to declare war against Germany.
- **"Panama Canal Completed"** This was an achievement of monumental importance, not only for the United States, but for the whole world. It saved 8,000 miles in an ocean trip around the horn from New York to San Francisco. Many, however, died from malaria and yellow fever during the years of construction.

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- **1918 "Influenza Kills Thousands!"** It is estimated that the Spanish influenza claimed the lives of half a million Americans. This was twice the overall death toll of WWI. The Soapstone area was not exempt.
- **"Allied Forces Break Through Hindenburg Line!"** September 29. This was Germany's central trench system and was the beginning of the end of Germany in WWI. One of the first armies that broke through were the valiant men of the 30th Infantry Battalion made up of mostly men from the Volunteer State of Tennessee. They returned home to Nashville to a joyful welcome.
- **1919: "Prohibition On the Way!"** On January 29, the United States Secretary proclaimed the Eighteenth Amendment.
- **"Women's Suffrage Bill Passed"** June 4, 1919. Mammy never voted. *It was "a man's business"* she declared.
- **"Treat of Versailles and League of Nations Rejected!"** The Senate voted 55 to 39 for the rejection.

"Good to the Last Drop!"

The newspapers used tons of ink in running stories about colorful Teddy Roosevelt. One story was about his visit to Nashville in 1907 when he stayed in the Maxwell House Hotel. He was offered a cup of Maxwell House coffee, and finishing, he exclaimed, "Good to the last drop!" The company began using this as a slogan in 1917. Mammy would have agreed with him, for Maxwell House was her "cup of coffee". She always drank it black in a saucer and without sugar.

Roosevelt entered into politics after becoming a national hero when he and his "Rough Riders" won the battle of San Juan Heights in Cuba during the brief war with Spain in 1898. As Vice President, he became President upon the death of McKinley in 1901. He is credited with successfully leading this country into the new century and to become a superpower. His approach to diplomacy was to "speak softly and carry a big stick". He realized that's the only kind of language some peoples of the world understand. He once made the following statement in a speech about the responsibility of this great nation to the rest of the world:

"The United States, though not flawless, is a profound force for good in the world... There comes a time in the life of a nation, as in the life of an individual, when it must face great responsibilities, whether it will or not. We have now reached that time. We cannot avoid facing the fact that we occupy a new place among the peoples of the world..."

Roosevelt was loved by many and hated by many more. Nevertheless, he has gone down in the history books as one of our greatest Presidents, certainly one of the

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most colorful. His two terms as President, like Maxwell House coffee, turned out to be "good to the last drop!"

In the obituary column of the local newspaper in 1907, there was, no doubt, the brief notice of the passing of my great-grandmother, Virginia Powell. It would have reported that she was the wife of Squire Dallas Powell and a daughter of the late Aaron Williams. It would have named Milton Powell, my grandfather, as one of her sons and her many grandchildren.

Squire Dallas remarried but died in 1917. In an interview with Aunt Verlie in her Romulus, Michigan home in 1994, she told me that Squire Dallas had willed everything to his widow. However, the children challenged the will and won. Milt Powell then bought the old home-place from the other heirs for \$3,500 with \$1,000 down and the balance due within one year. He was evidently unable to pay it off entirely in one year, but he did so in two. That was a lot of money in those days, and I have often wondered how he was able to manage it. Here was a man who was in bad health, self-employed without a regular income, and with several children still at home. He must have had a good head on his shoulders. Aunt Verlie told me that the house had been rented out by the widow, and they had to wait about a year for possession. During the time, they lived in a house near the railroad tracks just north of Fosterville. She remembered the trains loaded with soldiers going to war. She and the other children would stand in the front yard waving to them as they passed. When moving time finally came, they found the house in a mess. Somebody, presumably the renters, had carried off everything that was moveable, even the hardware on the doors! This would not have been considered newsworthy back then, but is now an interesting tid-bit of family history. That old house is more than 100 years old and still stands. Oh, if houses could talk!

CHANCERY COURT OF RUTHERFORD COUNTY	
CLERK AND MASTER'S OFFICE	
2120 ⁰⁰ / ₁₀₀	Rule No. _____ No. 95
Received of <u>L A Prother & M C Powell</u>	Murfreesboro, Tenn. <u>Feb 1</u> 19 <u>17</u>
the sum of <u>Two thousand five hundred & twenty</u>	DOLLARS,
the same being paid to the account of <u>Widow of Milt Powell & heirs</u>	
in the case of <u>Mrs. M. C. Powell vs. J. W. Powell et al</u>	
In the said court. Cash Book No. 1, Page <u>106</u>	<u>E. D. Hume</u> U. S. M.
	By _____ D. C. & M.

Milt Powell's loan certificate

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The Story of Beautiful Jim Key

Readers of the newspapers would have been fascinated by the story of a famous Shelbyville horse named "Beautiful Jim Key". Shelbyville is of international fame as the "Walking Horse Capital of the World". The Walking Horse Celebration is a big event held there every year. But Beautiful Jim Key was a different kind of show horse. He was a seasoned performer, amazing audiences everywhere with his ability to spell, pick out coins, make change, play a hand organ, respond to political questions from the audience, and even write his own name on a chalkboard. He could also add and subtract numbers up to 25 and spell the names of people in the audience.

The colt was not very promising when he first came into this world. In fact, he was so sickly that his owner considered having him put to sleep but decided instead to give him a chance by doctoring him as best he could. He succeeded. As the colt grew, he began to notice that he demonstrated unusual intelligence. He was opening gates, stealing apples from drawers, and seemed to understand when talked to, responding with a nod or a shake of the head. Thus, began a seven-year period of training and the beginning of touring in 1897.

This famous horse's owner and trainer was William Key, a freed slave and Civil War veteran. He was born in 1833 on a plantation near Winchester, Tennessee. His master was William Key who lived in Shelbyville. Key was devoted to his master and family. When the Civil War began, he accompanied the two Key boys who joined the Confederate army. He said later that he loved his young master and went with them because he was afraid they would get killed or not have anything to eat. He was with them at the surrender of Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River, northwest of Nashville. He built a one-man fort outside the main fort by digging a hole and covering it with logs. The soldiers jokingly called it "Fort Key". When the surrender came, Key entered the fort and, finding his two young masters, led them out to join Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry and escaped to Nashville. During the war, he was captured at least twice by the bluecoats and barely escaped execution both times. After the war ended, he returned home to find that his master had died and the plantation had been heavily mortgaged. But, again, he came to the rescue of his white family. He invented and marketed a salve called "Keystone Liniment" for horses and other animals. He paid off the mortgage and sent the two young Keys to college. During his travels, he bought a broken-down Arabian mare and had her bred to a Hamiltonian stallion. The foal was named Beautiful Jim Key.

William Key explained the secret of his success. He said that he never punished any of his animals, but treated them only with kindness. He was sponsored by the Humane Society. At children's matinee shows, he emphasized the importance of treating animals with respect and asked the children to sign pledge cards promising to always be kind to animals. He died in 1909 and was buried in Shelbyville. His horse died three years later and was buried just outside of Shelbyville.

CHAPTER VI

A "WILD AND WOOLY" DECADE

*"There is generation that curseth their father
and doth not bless their mother." (Eccl. 30:11)*

The twenties came in with a bang and departed with a sickly puff! The Great War was over. Peace and prosperity seemed for the taking. The future never looked brighter for the American people. It was a time to celebrate! And celebrate they did—for almost the whole decade. It was the time the Jazz Age began with Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. It became known as the "Roaring Twenties" This, however, was the decade when most of those who made up the "Greatest Generation" were born.

It was during these years that my mother and father met, fell in love, and married. My mother claimed that she was standing on the side porch of our house when she first saw my daddy. He had a wagon and a team of mules, Rat and Jack. Her father had hired him to haul cedar logs to the mill. The next time she saw him was at a party given by Elvira Brothers who had invited him as her date, but evidently Mom's charms stole him away. With his hair slicked back and dressed in his Sunday's best, he must have been "the cat's meow"! During their courtship, Dad went to Toledo, Ohio to work in an automobile factory.

Many southerners were lured "up Nawth" for that is where the jobs were. Several of my relatives were among the transplants. My mother's sister, Grace, had married Lewis Fulton and they were among those who migrated North searching for work. Buck, their oldest son, was about four or five years old at the time. They were traveling in an open automobile. Aunt Grace was in the back seat with Buck. She had on one of those large hats characteristic of the early 20's. When she awoke, she missed her hat and started searching for it. She asked Buck if he had seen it, and he replied, "Oh, I saw it blow off your head a long time ago!"

Some Soapstone folks came back home eventually. Some, like my Uncle Jordan's family, stayed until after WWII. Aunt Verlie stayed on, worked, and married Bob Williams. Her first husband, Eugene Berger Jernigan, had accidentally fallen off the running board of a truck and was run over. She was a hard worker and managed a small retail business for years. She and Bob bought a small farm in Sylvania, Ohio. But she never forgot her roots. Gene, her son, lived for a while with my grandparents while his mother was establishing herself in Toledo. Having found a home and achieving job security, she came and took Gene back with her. This was hard on my grandparents because they had become so attached to him. Looking at a picture of Soapstone, Gene once remarked, "If I lived there, I would want a house right on top."

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He had never forgotten Soapstone, either.

My dad and mother wrote a ton of letters to each other while he was away. In one letter, evidently wanting to impress his girl, he wrote that she wouldn't believe how much money he was making! After their marriage, they went back to Toledo for a while but didn't stay long. I have always suspected that Mom didn't like the city life and became home-sick. They came back to Tennessee and began farming on land owned by my dad's older brother, Hugh. Later, he and Mom made a trade with my grandmother to live in the house with her and farm. That arrangement continued until her death in 1952. My grandmother loved my dad as if he were her son instead of a son-in-law. My parents bought the farm from the other heirs. It has remained in the family since 1883.

There were many important events in the 1920's that affected the lives of all Americans, including the folks of Soapstone. Imagine that YOU WERE THERE. This is what you would have seen happen:

When Did it Happen?

- **It Happened in 1920:** The first session of the League of Nations was held in Paris in January of 1920. Forty-one nations were represented, but the United States did not join. The idea may have been good, but the plan didn't work. It turned out to be a dismal failure.
- **Prohibition went into effect on January 16th.** America, from "sea to shining sea", went dry. This was the result of the passage of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution. But it was a failure. It did not stop drinking and alcoholism. In fact, it became the "forbidden fruit" and increased along with crime and corruption. Bootlegging became a way of life for many, and my guess is that some of it was in the proximity of Soapstone. Many died from bad whisky. Speakeasies, disguised as soft-drink stores or outlets, were opened up in larger cities. Anyone who knew the proper password could get all he wanted or could afford. Many of the gangs and well-known criminals, such as Al Capone, had their beginning in this way. The 20's can be remembered as the "Lawless Decade".
- **The first radio broadcasts were heard commercially but radio was still considered a novelty.** Although some messages had been broadcast by the wireless, regular programming did not begin until the twenties.
- **It Happened in 1921:** Mussolini came to power in Italy. He became the head of the Fascist Party, and then a full-fledged dictator. He was called Il Duce (leader) by his "black shirt" followers. The "black shirts" were made up of thugs who thrived on violence and intimidation. His goal was to develop an Italian Empire.
- **It Happened in 1922:** King Tut's tomb was discovered. Tutankhamen was

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a boy king who died while still a teenager about 3,000 years ago. His tomb contained rich treasures which are kept in the museum in Cairo. I have been privileged to visit the tomb and the museum.

- **It Happened in 1923:** Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party began a rapid rise to power in Germany. Storm Troopers burst into a beer hall in Munich and broke up a political meeting. From there, they marched into Munich where there was a confrontation with police. Several were killed, and Hermann Goering was wounded but survived. Hitler was sent to prison where he wrote *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) in 1925. In it, he outlined what he planned to do but, sadly, the world paid little attention to it until it was too late.
- **It Happened in 1924:** Lenin died in Russia. Beginning in 1917, he led the Bolshevik Revolution and set up the world's first Marxist state. Stalin became his successor.
- **It Happened in 1925:** The famous Scopes Trial took place in Dayton, Tennessee, featuring two great orators of the age, Clarence Darrow and William J. Bryan. It had to do with a state law that forbade the teaching of evolution in the public schools. Clarence Darrow died five days after the close of the trial.
- Floyd Collins became trapped in a cave near Cave City, Kentucky for eighteen days. There was no way rescuers could reach him, and he died.
- **It Happened in 1926:** Trudy Ederle swam the English Channel, 22 miles, between Cape Griz-Nez and Dover in 14 hours and 31 minutes. She came home to the wildest ticker-tape parade ever staged for a woman in New York City.
- Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs.
- **It Happened in 1927:** General Chiang Kaishek became president of the Chinese Republic, but civil war soon broke out, led by the Communists. It lasted for 22 years until Mao Zedong finally gained control in 1949.
- Charles Lindbergh made the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic. Flying a Ryan monoplane, he flew from New York to Paris in 33 hours and 39 minutes. He became an instant American hero. There was a ticker-tape parade in New York City, the likes of which this nation had never seen.
- Jack Dempsey lost a fight to Gene Turney. When his wife asked him what went wrong, he replied, "I forgot to duck!"
- **It Happened in 1928:** Herbert Hoover became President succeeding Calvin Coolidge (Silent Cal), under whom he had served as US Secretary of Commerce. He promised "a chicken in every pot and two cars in every garage". It didn't happen.
- **It Happened in 1929:** Wall Street Crashed. October 29 became known in the history books as "Black Tuesday". This brought on the Great Depression that lasted a decade until the beginning of WWII. According to historians,

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Herbert Hoover seemed out of touch with the people and could not come up with an effective plan of what to do. His policy was to leave it up to big business to pull the country out of the Depression. He quickly lost the confidence of the people. My father used to talk about "Hoover carts". He explained that it was the rear end of an automobile, after the body was removed, with boards attached to it for a seat and footrest and staves hitched to a horse or a mule. That was the only transportation some people could afford. We also read about "Hoovervilles". These were shanties and shacks built by jobless and homeless people in various cities. One of the largest was in Washington, DC where the "bonus marchers" and their families were forcibly driven away by orders from the President. This did not score him any points with the public.

CHAPTER VII

THE WORLD I WAS BORN INTO

"Life is like a mirror--we get the best results when we smile at it" -Selected

I began life in 1932 during the height of the Great Depression. It is called the "Great Depression" because it not only affected the United States but most of the rest of the world. In the next few years, impressions were made upon my mind that have stayed with me for a lifetime. They were not bad memories--mostly happy and carefree ones. If you had been there, you would have seen that life was not easy for my family nor for hardly anyone else.

Mile Markers

Going back to those days in our memories, here is what we would see at each mile-marker along the way:

- **MILE MARKER 1930:** My mother lost her father in 1930. Milt Powell was only fifty-nine years of age. It was Election Day, and he was an election judge at the Fosterville Railroad Depot. I was a hot day, and there was a large crowd. He became ill and had to be taken home. The doctor was called, but there was nothing he could do. In a few days, he was dead. Diagnosis: Heat stroke. The newspaper notice described him as being "well known as a substantial citizen and farmer". I once asked my grandmother how she was able to overcome her grief, and she replied, "I tried to keep busy."
- The "Roaring Twenties" was out of steam. As the decade of the thirties began, it was only a few months after the stock market crash of 1929. Herbert Hoover was President. Unemployment stood at 8.9%, a high figure, but it was destined to go much higher.
- In Europe, Adolf Hitler's National Socialist (Nazi) party had become the second largest political party in Germany. The world failed to take the rise of this house painter and WWI private seriously. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin "collectivized" Russian farms. China was engaged in a civil war. On the home front, the United States was in its first full year of what would be called the Great Depression.
- **MILE MARKER 1931:** Americans began to realize that the economy was not a mere recession but a full-blown depression that would be around for a long time. Unemployment reached 16.3%.

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- In Germany, the Nazi Party was gaining power. In the Far East, the Japanese invaded Manchuria. The war of the Pacific had begun which would last for the next fourteen years.
- **MILE MARKER 1932:** Unemployment jumped to more than 24%. The "Bonus Army" of 11,000 WWI veterans marched against Washington demanding bonuses promised by Congress. After two months, they were forcibly driven away by police with machine guns and tear gas. This was also the year that Charles and Anne Lindbergh's baby was kidnapped. His body was not found until nine months later.
- In Germany, the National Socialist Party continued to make significant gains. In China, Shanghai was taken by the Japanese. The failed farm innovations of Stalin in Russia brought about a devastating famine.
- **MILE MARKER 1933:** The U. S. economy had hit rock bottom. Unemployment stood at 25.2%. Farms and homes were being foreclosed. Educated and experienced people in business were reduced to selling pencils and apples on the street. Many homeless people rode the rails from city to city in search of work or handouts. It is said that one man walked 900 miles to try to find work. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated that year, and one of the first things he did was to declare a four-day "bank holiday" which alarmed depositors but saved many banks from collapse. Later, Congress passed the Emergency Banking Act of 1933. On top of all this, on March 18, there was a killer tornado that demolished 1,500 homes in East Nashville.
- In spite of all the bad news, there was a bit of good news, although it was largely unnoticed at the time. TVA was established on May 18, 1933. This had a far-reaching effect on the total economic recovery of the south.
- Overseas, things were getting worse. In Palestine, Arabs protested Jewish immigration with riots. In Germany, Adolf Hitler was named Chancellor, but his ambition did not stop there. He was on his way to absolute power. A few days later, the Reichstag building burned under mysterious circumstances. It was also the year that Hitler established Germany's first concentration camp near Dachau, housing political prisoners.
- **MILE MARKER 1934:** There was a slight improvement in the economy. (When you hit bottom, they say, there is no other way to go but up.) There was some less unemployment. But there came a set-back in the form of a natural disaster. There was the Dust Bowl—35 million acres of farmland literally dried up and was blown away by the wind.
- The Farm Bankruptcy Act this year restricted bank repossessions of farms, and 140 million acres of Federal land was opened up for grazing.
- The CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) was organized which gave jobs to young men building roads, bridges, and flood-control systems.

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- This was also the year that FHA (Federal Housing Administration) came into existence, making it possible for many to buy homes.
- In Germany, Paul von Hindenburg died and Adolf Hitler not only made himself president, but *fuehrer* which means “ultimate leader”. The SS and the Gestapo assassinated about 100 of Hitler’s enemies. This became known in the history books as “The Night of the Long Knives”. In Russia, Joseph Stalin began four years of terror, murdering political enemies, military officers, and intellectuals. In China, Mao Tse-tung’s army of 100,000 marched against President Chiang Kaishek.
- **MILE MARKER 1935:** Unemployment dropped to a little over 20%. WPA (Works Progress Administration) was begun to federally subsidize jobs in teaching and construction of certain projects. The Social Security Act was also passed this year.
- The United Mine Workers (CIO) came into existence under the leadership of John L. Lewis.
- Germany repudiated the Versailles Treaty. Rearmament was stepped up, and compulsory military service was inaugurated for all young German men. Many Jews left Germany because of increased persecution, but most stayed. Yet, the world closed its eyes to what was coming.
- On the other side of the globe, the Japanese were victorious over the Nationalist troops of China and set up their own government. Mussolini started a war against the almost helpless Ethiopia. In one air raid, 2,000 Ethiopians were killed.
- **MILE MARKER 1936:** FDR was elected to a second term. Unemployment dropped another 3%. It was clear that the economy was improving, but it still had a long way to go.
- German troops invaded the Rhineland, a non-military zone separating France and Germany. The African country of Ethiopia was annexed to Mussolini’s Italian Empire. Germany, Italy, and Japan formed an anti-Communist axis. The Olympics were hosted in Germany. Jesse Owens, a black American athlete, won four gold metals. Hitler refused to congratulate him.
- **MILE MARKER 1937:** Again, more Americans found work. Unemployment stood at 14.3%. The Golden Gate Bridge opened in San Francisco. Howard Hughes set a new air record when he flew from Los Angeles to New York in 7 hours and 28 seconds. A great flood along the Mississippi and Ohio rivers left millions homeless. A natural gas explosion in a school in Texas killed 298, mostly children. The German airship, Hindenburg, exploded as it was landing in New Jersey, killing 30 passengers and crew-members. Amelia Earhart disappeared over the Pacific as she was attempting to fly around the world. It has always been a theory

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that she was shot down by the Japanese. But they have always denied it. They captured Nanking, the Capitol of China, killing 350,000 civilians within one month. More civilians were killed within thirty days than were killed in all countries throughout the war. Germany became involved in the Spanish Civil War by supplying airplanes. The Japanese continued their aggression of China. They mistakenly sank a U. S. gunboat and two tankers. Some Americans were killed.

- **MILE MARKER 1938:** The recovery experienced a brief setback. Unemployment rose to 19%. Minimum wage was .40 cents per hour. The work-week was 44 hours. Boxer Joe Louis knocked out Max Schmeling in the first round. A super hurricane hit the east coast, causing a 40-foot tidal wave in Long Island and a 100-foot tidal wave in Providence, RI. Over 2,500 were killed and injured, and 63,000 people were left homeless. H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* was aired on Halloween with a news-breaking format causing many to believe that it was the real thing. The comic strip *Superman* was begun.
- The world map was changing. Persecution of Jews in Germany continued, Austria and part of Czechoslovakia were annexed to Germany. Afraid of another European war, Neville Chamberlain, prime minister of Great Britain, agreed with Hitler's decision to move into Czechoslovakia and announced to his people, "Peace in our time." But there was no peace.
- **MILE MARKER 1939:** War began in Europe. Germany and the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression treaty, which did not hold up for long. Poland was attacked by 52 German divisions. Two days later, Britain, France, India, Australia, and New Zealand declared war on Germany. The Soviet army also occupied Poland and then invaded Finland. Although several nations declared neutrality, it was clear that WWII had begun. President Roosevelt, along with other leaders in our government, realized that the time of our involvement was at hand.

The stage was set. War clouds could be clearly seen on the horizon. A few months later, on December 7, 1941, the storm broke. America declared war upon Japan and Germany and their allies.

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE ON THE HARDSCRABBLE ROAD

*"For we brought nothing into this world
and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (I Tim. 6:7)*

Not far from my present home, there is a street that used to be named "Hardscrabble". It was a street on the other side of the railroad tracks, if you can imagine. This was where the less fortunate people used to live. Now, everything has changed, even the name. It has become a high-class neighborhood! The street is lined with houses worth up to a half-million dollars or more. I have a friend who lives just off this street, and I often tease him about living on "Hardscrabble" lane. But whatever is suggested by the name "Hardscrabble" may be applied to life as it was for most people in the 1930's. It is the beginning of the Great Depression and a journey down "Hardscrabble" Road. It was a far cry from a pleasant stroll down Memory Lane. It is not a road to riches. It was much like a maze, crowded with folks trying to find their way. There were detours, blind alleys, and side roads leading nowhere. It was a difficult journey for most everyone, including my parents.

What was life like back then? The following charts may bring back nostalgic memories for many older folk, and help some of the younger ones to understand, and perhaps better appreciate, what their grandparents went through.

Annual Earnings: 1932 to 1934

Airline pilot	\$8,000.00	Electrical worker	\$1,559.00
Airline Stewardess	\$1,500.00	Engineer	\$2,520.00
Bus Driver	\$1,373.00	Farm Hand	\$216.00
Chauffeur	\$624.00	Lawyer	\$4,218.00
Civil Service Employee	\$1,284.00	Teacher	\$1,227.00
College teacher	\$3,111.00	Registered Nurse	\$936.00
Construction worker	\$907.00	Secretary	\$1,040.00
Dentist	\$2,392.00	Typist	\$624.00
Doctor	\$3,382.00	U. S. Congressman	\$8,663.00
Dressmaker	\$780.00	Waitress	\$520.00

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My dad often worked for as little as fifty cents a day. He tried farming but made very little money. Actually, he didn't begin to make anything much until after WWII started when he began public work in addition to farming. His first job that I remember was helping build Camp Forrest at Tullahoma. He and some other men car-pooled daily. After that job was finished, he went to work for Mr. Albert Alderson at the Union Stock Yard in Nashville where he stayed until his retirement. He started out there in the early 1940's for only \$12.00 per week. That seems such a pitifully small wage now, but the cost of living was but a fraction of what it is now. There was also income from the farm, and we raised almost everything we ate. In fact, my folks got out of debt and even saved some money.

Cost of Living: 1932 to 1943

New Dodge automobile	\$595.00	Wing chair	\$39.00
Model A Ford, 1929	\$57.50	Double bed and mattress	\$14.95
New Chevy pickup truck	\$650.00	Dental filling	\$1.00
Women's cloth coat	\$6.98	Razor blades (10)	\$.49
Women's wool dress	\$1.95	Kodak Box Brownie	\$2.50
Women's wool suit	\$3.98	Gasoline (per gallon)	\$.18
Silk stockings	\$.69	Two-wheeled bike	\$10.95
Leather shoes	\$1.79	Fielder's glove and ball	\$1.95
Men's overcoat	\$11.00	Sirloin steak (per lb.)	\$.29
Wool Suit	\$10.50	Bacon (per lb.)	\$.22
Trousers	\$2.00	Chicken (per lb.)	\$.22
Shoes	\$3.85	Dozen eggs	\$.29
Double bed sheets	\$.67	House, 6 rm., gr (Detroit)	\$2,800.00
Towel	\$.24	Tour or Europe, 60 days	\$495.00
Blanket	\$1.00	Console radio	\$49.95
Wool rug (9' x 12')	\$5.85	Desk typewriter	\$19.75
Electric iron	\$2.00	Automobile tire	\$6.20
Electric washing machine	\$47.95	Copper lamp	\$1.95
Electric sewing machine	\$24.95		

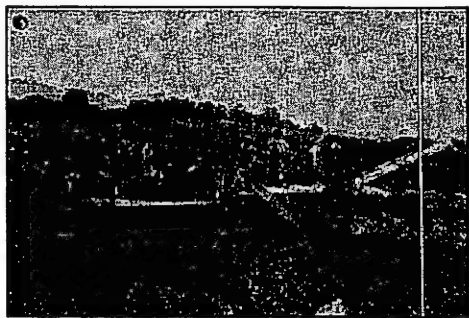
Show *Me* how Po' Folks Live?

Visiting in homes in the South, I used to be often whimsically welcomed with, "Come on in, we'll show you how po' folks live!" Well, I didn't have to be shown because I knew first-hand how "po' folks" lived. I believe that this helped me to relate to the poor people of Africa and other places where I have been. At the summit of

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Soapstone, I can still look down upon the forty acres of rocks and cedar bushes where I grew up and wonder how anyone could have made a living on that small farm. But, we made it. We were "as poor as Job's turkey", but, as a child, I didn't know it. I didn't know that we would have been considered below the poverty level. Only a few people we knew were much better off than we were. I did not always get what I wanted, but I understood that there were things the family could not afford. My parents did the best they could toward me. But I knew better than to whine and beg for things I could not have. I learned to do without. But I could dream. We didn't have many material things in those days, but we did have each other and plenty to eat. We didn't have electricity until about 1939. We used coal-oil lamps. My folks didn't have indoor plumbing until years after I left home. But we never went to bed hungry. No one in our community did, as far as I know. With but one exception, I

never heard of anyone in our community losing their farm or home. Property back then wasn't worth much in today's dollars, but most of it was free and clear. We didn't know anything about soup lines or taking handouts from Uncle Sam. We were self-reliant. My parents raised beef and pork and always had huge gardens. They worked hard during the late summer and fall, canning fruits and vegetables for the winter. As a child, I was expected to do my part



Threshing wheat

with the chores. We walked just about everywhere we went. It was a healthy life - plenty of sunshine, fresh air, good food and exercise. It was a time when country doctors made house calls and grocery stores came right up to the front door in converted school buses and old trucks. We also traded with one or more of the country stores in the village. Sometimes we rode the train to Murfreesboro to go to the doctor or do more extensive shopping. This was a thrill!

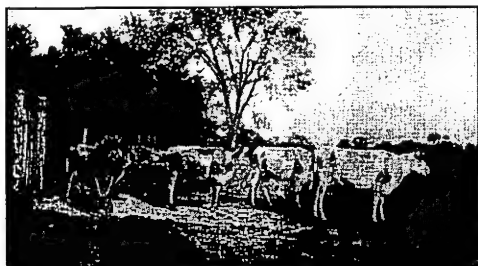
We lived in Rutherford County, our county seat being Murfreesboro. It is located in almost the exact geographical center of Tennessee, about thirty miles southeast of Nashville. Middle Tennessee State Teacher's College, now Middle Tennessee State University, is located there. Murfreesboro has an interesting history. It was named in honor of Colonel Hardy Murfre who fought in the American Revolution. He owned more than 10,000 acres of land in Williamson County but, after his death in 1809, his family moved to Murfreesboro. Because of its central location, Murfreesboro was the Capital of Tennessee in the early 1820's. The battle of Stone's River, one of the bloodiest of the Civil War, was fought nearby. During the

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Union occupation, the courthouse was used as a prison. It still stands virtually unchanged from the way it was then. An open well has been discovered and restored on the northern side of the courthouse square. This is where the businesses and customers got their drinking water on hot days. Murfreesboro was also the childhood home of Jean Faircloth, the wife of General Douglas MacArthur.

As bad as times were during the Great Depression, we never locked our doors. We never saw the need for locks. Nor did we see a need for an organized "Neighborhood Watch". Neighbors just naturally watched out for each other. Occasionally, there may have been some cattle rustling, and we might have heard of someone missing something, but it was unusual.

A typical day at our home started about four o'clock in the morning. It was still dark. My dad got the milk buckets together and started toward the barn, calling for the cows: "*whoeee, suck, suck, suck*". It was still dark, but my dog, Highway, was always ready to go when he heard the buckets rattling. He would disappear over the hill, running as fast as he could and, a few minutes later, come bringing the cows in. Until we got electricity, milking was done by hand in the dim and flickering light of a lantern. Dad could be heard singing and whistling as he got out the feed. My mother helped with the milking, and my grandmother would get breakfast and have it ready by the time they were finished at the barn. Since I was a young school boy, they allowed me to sleep in the mornings, but I had my chores to do in the afternoons when I got home. There were times when my dad would pasture cows on Soapstone or on the Lynch place across the road, and my dog and I would have to go get them.



Dad's first herd: Lissie, Price, Blue, Spot, & Gernsey



Day before market, Roy Beasley, Sr.

After the early-morning chores at the barn, my dad had worked up a big appetite. Breakfast, prepared by my grandmother, was always a main meal because

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dad would not usually be home until supper time. (The mid-day meal was always called "dinner" and the evening meal was "supper".) Breakfast included homemade biscuits, real butter (churned at home), homemade jam and jelly, country sausage or country ham (grown on the farm), milk gravy, or red-eye gravy when ham was on the menu. My grandmother always had plenty of coffee, and it had to be Maxwell House, black and without sugar. After breakfast, dad went to work. It would still be early morning, sometimes before sunup. He was a hard worker. He made a crop on the side of Soapstone where it was not too steep. Farmers in the hills used a special hill-side plow pulled by teams. No tractor could make it. At night, he would be dirty and dead tired. My mother would get a wash pan of warm water and soap and a towel and sit down on the floor in the kitchen while he sat on the old meal chest and wash his feet. I thought that was a lovely thing for her to do.

Dad was too poor to own a watch. He went by the sun's reckoning and was pretty good at it, too. He could estimate time by the position of the sun to within a few minutes of actual time. I don't know what he did when it was cloudy. Of course, the real important times were not difficult. Lunch was when his stomach started growling, and when he saw the sun getting ready to set, he knew it was time to go home.

I often helped to plant corn and beans and set out tomato plants. One hot day, I accidentally (or accidentally on purpose) dropped a bag of beans. Instead of taking the time to pick them up, I just covered them with some dirt and went on my way. All was well until the seed began to germinate and sprout. Then I was in big trouble! What does the Bible say about your sins finding you out? I learned it the hard way!

On another occasion, I was supposed to be helping my dad do something, but I didn't have my heart in it and wasn't doing it to suit him. I had my mind set on doing something else. Finally, my dad had just about enough of my whining, and in exasperation exclaimed, "Go on and do what you want to do. All I've got to say is that you had better make a preacher and learn to talk your way through life, because you'll never make it any other way!" That stung! When I did something that Dad didn't approve of, he would often say, "Well, boy, you've made your bed; now you must lie in it!" Since then, I have lain in many uncomfortable beds!

Dad worked six days a week, from sunup until sundown, even on holidays (except the 4th of July and Christmas day, perhaps), but never on Sunday, except milking. Unfortunately, the cows didn't know the difference between Sunday and any other day of the week! They never took a day off! Milking time came twice *every* day. But Sunday was considered the Lord's day, and we went to church twice - never any question about it.

Arm and Hammer Baking Soda. I suspect that you have a box in your kitchen. But I remember Arm and Hammer for another reason. We didn't spend money on toothpaste. We used Arm and Hammer Baking Soda and salt. It was pretty good. Try it. It had other uses, too, such as baking!

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My mother and grandmother were always busy. I can almost hear them quoting that little rhyme, "Man works from sun to sun, but woman's work is never done!" There was a lot of truth to that in those days. They were both excellent seamstresses. They made nearly all their own clothes and some of mine. Flour used to come in colorful sacks, and this is the material they often used. Seldom did they use store-bought material. Their sewing machine was an ancient treadle Singer. They saved everything they could – buttons, old cloth for quilts, string, old zippers, etc. Our everyday work or play clothes were overalls with patches and sometimes patches on patches. We would never consider wearing such clothing in public. How times have changed! Now it would be in style!

My grandmother loved to quilt. She would sit up at night, especially during the winter, working on her quilt pieces. When she got to the point of putting it all together, she placed it in a quilting frame that hung from the ceiling. The ceiling was high, and when finished for the day, she would roll the frame up out of the way. Before her death, she made a quilt for each of her children. I still have one of her quilts and the old quilting frame.

My mother and grandmother were good housekeepers, and in the country on the farm, that was a real job! Beds were always made up every morning. They were never left rumpled from the night before. My grandmother meticulously went around and around the bed, fluffing pillows and straightening the bed-spread, smoothing out all the lumps. The furniture was dusted and the whole house was always swept clean, even the porch and the dirt path leading to the house.

On a farm where there were milk cows, pigs, and other animals, there was always the problem of flies - swarms of flies. I have often thought of the plague of flies brought upon the Egyptians. They didn't have much defense against them. We had a little more. Screen doors and windows helped, but, still, flies got into the house. Fly swatters didn't make a dent in the number. Kill one and it would soon be replaced with two, it seemed. We would often have to go through the house waving towels, driving them out the doors. "Head 'em up, drive 'em out!" But soon, they would find a way to get back in. We used fly spray at the barn and at the house with some effect. The most troublesome flies for the animals were the huge, blood-sucking horse flies. And the cats were kept busy with mice.

Cooking wasn't easy, either. No such thing as frozen dinners or microwave ovens. They cooked on an ancient wood stove in a small kitchen. One of my chores was to chop wood and bring it into the kitchen. In the summertime, it became so hot that I don't know how they stood it. There was no air conditioning, except when you opened the windows, and then it was usually hot air blowing in.

My folks always raised chickens. There were plenty of eggs and frying-sized chickens to eat. My grandmother was an expert at killing chickens. She would go out with her sun bonnet on, pick out an unsuspecting prospect, and, quick as lightning, grab it and, holding it by the head, give it a twist. The headless chicken would flop

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around for a while and even sometimes try to run, bumping into things. She would remove the feathers using boiling water, saving them for a pillow.

Fried chicken was my grandmother's specialty. She could have competed any day with Colonel Sanders! As my dad used to say, "It almost makes you swallow your tongue!" She began by cutting up the chicken and covering the pieces with flour and seasoning and placing them in the skillet. Ah, what good eating that was! Often, we would have chicken for breakfast. My roommate in college, Harold Taylor, who was a city boy from Indiana, used to visit, and when we had chicken, gravy and biscuits for breakfast, he thought that was the strangest thing he had ever seen. Another old-fashioned dish was cornmeal dumplings. Hardly anybody anymore knows how to make them like she did. For dessert and snacks, she often made fried apple turnovers that made my mouth water.

Growing up in the thirties and forties could be "hazardous to your health". Hog lard was used instead of vegetable oil for cooking. Green beans were flavored with fat meat. To throw away the fat and eat only the lean was considered wasteful. That, plus breathing second-hand smoke, lead gasoline exhausts from automobiles, and being around lead paint and asbestos. It is a wonder that any of us ever lived past middle age!

The medicine cabinet was bare except for a bottle of aspirin, Vick's Salve, rubbing alcohol, and a bottle of iodine. We had plenty of home remedies, though. Chewing tobacco juice was good for bee and wasp stings. It kept it from swelling, but we didn't keep any of that around. Sassafras tea would make measles pop out. Also, a teaspoon full of Arm and Hammer Baking Soda mixed in a glass of water was good for the upset stomach. It was thought that fat meat would draw poison out of a puncture wound. A bandage was made from an old bed sheet that had been thoroughly cleaned. Salt was used on fresh wounds based on the theory that the more it stung and hurt, the more good it was doing. Some folks kept a bottle of whiskey-for medicinal purposes, of course. It was prayed that no one in the family would get seriously hurt or sick because drug store medicine, doctors, dentists, and hospitals were just too expensive, and medical insurance was not available. We couldn't afford it even if it were. My folks lived by the slogan: "Use it up, wear it out, make do, or do without."

One thing my parents never permitted was talk back. If I ever did, it was only once. They also insisted that I be respectful to my elders, black or white. I knew better than to answer an adult with a simple "yes" or "no". It had to be a "yes, ma'am" or "no, sir". If someone gave me something or if I was complimented, Mom would say, "Now, what do you say?" and I'd say "Thank you".

As a teenager, I was self-conscious about my looks. I didn't like the shape of my lower jaw and chin, but there wasn't anything I could do about that. I was also concerned about acne that bothered several of my friends. I heard that cold water would close the pores in the skin, so I washed my face daily in a pan of ice water.

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This amused my folks, and they often teased me about it, but I was never troubled with acne.

It was a time when country doctors made house calls. One time, a doctor came to our house to see Mammy. While he was there, my dad complained to him about his recurring sinus problem. The doctor snapped off a small limb from a tree in our front yard and stripped off the bark. He placed gauze on the end of it and stuck it up my dad's nose. After that experience, dad simply went back to taking aspirin for the pain and never again complained to a doctor about his sinuses.

We kept milk and other perishables cool in a hillside spring not far from our house. We also had an icebox with deliveries of ice once or twice a week. There was a card that we placed in the window with numbers at each corner indicating the amount of ice we wanted; 25, 50, 75, 100 pounds. One of the delivery men was a tall Afro-American who was badly crippled with a leg bent inwardly at the knee. But he was always on the job. It was always a treat to make ice cream about once a week in the summertime, usually on Saturday night. I liked to lick the dasher. Somehow, it just tasted better. At first, my dad made a make-shift freezer by placing a gallon bucket inside of a three-gallon bucket of ice and layers of salt. He would take the small bucket by the handle and keep turning it back and forth until the ice cream was well-frozen. If we were saving it for Sunday's dinner, they would wrap it well in an old quilt and place it in the ice box. My folks were experts at make-do!

I have always appreciated feminine beauty, even as a small boy. On the radio, Camay Soap was advertised as, "The Soap of Beautiful Women". My older first cousin, Ed Lamb, had just married, and they came to our house for a visit. I thought his new bride was about the prettiest lady I had ever seen. I couldn't keep my eyes off her. She was sitting on the old meal chest in the kitchen while my mother and grandmother were going about putting the finishing touches on dinner. I eased up to her and asked, "Do you use the soap of beautiful women?"

When my dad started making more money, he would often bring home hamburger meat on pay day, and we would feast on Mom's jumbo hamburgers. In those days, I could put away four or five! Also, my dad bought candy bars such as Mounds or Almond Joy by the box. I was not satisfied until they were all gone!

The weekly washing was done on Mondays and ironing the next day. Washing was done in a galvanized metal tub and with a scrub board. As I was beginning to learn to talk, I started calling the scrub board "the lord". (Wonder how I picked that up?) When my mother told this to my uncle, Jordan Powell, he laughed and said that, to him, it was more like the devil!

TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) brought electricity to our community in about 1939. After more than a century of wasting our natural resources, Congress created TVA as a federal corporation in 1933 with headquarters in Knoxville, Tennessee. Electric power supplies the valley, an area of about 41,000 square miles, about four-fifths the size of England, as well as an additional 80,000-mile area,

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stretching far outside the valley. Along the Tennessee River, about twenty dams were built by the TVA, and that many more were bought from private corporations. This improved the waterways for traffic and controlled flooding, in addition to providing electrical service to rural areas. Not only was this beneficial to our area, but a boon to the entire Southern economy. Most everyone was quick to take advantage of the low cost of electrical power. There was no more need for the coal oil Aladdin lamp to read by or a lantern to do chores at the barn except, of course, when power failed, which happened quite often. But many labor-saving devices soon became a practicality.³⁹

The story was told of a men's meeting being called at a nearby church to discuss wiring the church building for electricity. One old gentleman raised his hand and asked, "What are you going to do about the coal oil lamps on the walls?" "Why, I guess we will take them down and store them somewhere," was the reply. "I object to that!" he declared. "Well, what do you suggest that we do with them?" "Let them stay right where they are!" he demanded, and the meeting was adjourned. That was a funny story but, in reality, it was a practical suggestion because the electricity in those days was not dependable. It went off just about every time it thundered, it seemed.

Another story that made its rounds about that time went something like this: A group of men met together to discuss wiring the church building. They were talking about purchasing some light fixtures and a beautiful chandelier. One cantankerous old gentleman flatly stated, "I object to that!" When asked his reason, he replied, "I've got two reasons. First, it costs too much, and second, nobody can play it anyhow!"

My folks had our house wired. Uncle Hugh Beasley did the work. He was an expert at just about everything mechanical and electrical, but his work was not very neat. Our wiring was rather primitive by today's standards—a single light bulb in each room dangling from the ceiling at the end of a green electric cord. There was an outlet for the radio and ironing. There was also just one switch for the front porch light. Later, my dad ran lights to the garage and barn. That was pure luxury, but we still milked by hand! The basic light bill ran about \$12.00 per month. I was not allowed to turn on any lights until it was really needed. The first labor-saving appliance that my mother insisted upon was an electric wringer-type washing machine which sat on the side porch. We still did not have indoor plumbing, however. When I was a child, I heard of Aunt Verlie in Toledo, Ohio having a bathroom and a toilet inside her house. I thought it so strange. I was used to the outdoor privy. In fact, most of the country homes and many of the city dwellings had outhouses. Pure luxury in those days was when you had two holes with lids in the privy instead of just one! In the real estate ads, the word "modern" meant that the house had indoor plumbing.

On wash day, we had to carry buckets of water from the spring to fill the

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washing machine. The water was heated outside in a big black kettle. Ironing was done with a pair of flat irons with handles. A pair was needed because while using one while hot, the other would be heating in the fireplace or on a stove. The homemade ironing board was placed between two chairs. Later, my mother got an electric iron. What a wonderful improvement that was! Ladies rejoiced. Ironing became a snap! (To that, I don't think my mother and grandmother would quite agree!)

We also carried water from the spring for Mammy's flowers. She loved flowers. Several big pots of Elephant Ears sat around the porch during the summer, but had to be lugged inside during the winter. She had several old-fashioned rose bushes, as well as irises, geraniums, and buttercups. She always had big containers of petunias. She always watered in the late afternoon, and I often helped. As a teenager, I attached a pipe to the pool and ran the pipe into the yard with a faucet so that she could use a hose. This small convenience she appreciated.

We did not have an electric refrigerator until after the war. I will never forget that Kelvinator refrigerator and the cool air and the good smells that came from it when the door was opened. More than once, I was reprimanded for opening and closing the door just to see if I could catch the light going off and on. I thought this was the most marvelous thing I had ever seen.

We got our water for household use from a spring which was always cool and plentiful. My uncles, when they were boys, used it to keep their Cokes cool there. But our drinking water was from a well. It was sulfur! White sulfur, though; not black like what some of our neighbors had. Black sulfur water looked like oil. We couldn't use it for washing dishes because it would turn silverware black. My city cousins would often come to visit, and they would turn up their noses and screw up their faces and say, "*Pewee*, how can you stand that! It smells like rotten eggs!" They held their noses when they finally got so thirsty they had to drink. I couldn't understand their strange behavior. To me, it was the best water in the world. I tasted better than their old "city water"!

My mother used to tell about Mammy going to the well for a fresh bucket of sulfur water when she knew Aunt Grace was coming for a visit because she remembered that she liked the water. She also told of her staying awake until all the children were at home and in the bed at night. Mammy loved all her children and would do anything she could for them.

One year, Mammy tried raising turkeys. It was a disaster. Now, if you know anything about turkeys, you know that it is hard to fence them in. They got out of the yard where they were kept and flew over to our neighbor's barn, Mr. Sam Chrisman. They started eating some of the corn that he had given to his hogs. He got on his horse and angrily drove the turkeys back home with his dogs, killing one or two in the process. This is one of the few times I ever saw my grandmother angry. She was fairly fuming. Now, Mr. Chrisman depended upon our hillside spring for water for

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his cattle. It was piped into a big concrete water tank on his property. So, Mammy donned her bonnet (she never went outside without her bonnet), took a hoe and went and changed the course of the stream from the spring, thus depriving Mr. Chrisman of his water! She literally "cut his water off"! She had what she called "gumption". She was a widow, but not defenseless. She was not about to let anyone take advantage of her. She was a meek and gentle lady, but inside, she had determination and a will of pure steel. That was the Johnson "Viking" in her!

Outside the kitchen, there was a small back porch and a shelf with wash pans, homemade lye soap, a dipper, towels, and buckets of water from the spring. This was for washing up before coming into the house. This, my grandmother insisted upon.

Oh yes, we had a telephone. We felt up-to-date. The Fosterville exchange was operated by the Lee Crosslins. We had to almost yell to be heard by the other party, even just down the road. Ours was a party line, and our ring was two and a half. When the phone rang, I would pick up the receiver and hear other receivers on the party line go *click, click*. That way, everybody kept up with the latest news.

When making a call, we had to wait for others on the part line to hang up. Sometimes, that took quite a while. To make a local telephone call, we would turn the crank and ring once. Mrs. Crosslin or one of the girls would answer, "*Numbah, please.*" Sometimes we would just say, "I want to talk to so-an'-so" and would be quickly connected.

Mrs. Crosslin was a pleasant lady. She was so thin, it seemed that a puff of wind would blow her away, but she was a ball of energy. That's what it took to run a rural telephone exchange in those days. When there was a death or an emergency, she would take charge and spend hours ringing up neighbors, getting the word around. She did what we now call a 911 service. She was also a whiz at tracking down people by calling around and asking if anyone had seen so-and-so.

If we wanted to make a long-distance call, we would give the operator the number and say that we wanted to make it a "person-to-person call". Then, we would hang up, and she would go to work routing the call. Sometimes, it took hours. When she reached the party, she would ring our number and say, "Your call to so-an'-so is ready". Yes, the Crosslins, and later the Frank Clarks, offered a valuable service to our community, personalized service that is unheard of now.

Unpredictable winter weather, however, usually played havoc with our telephone lines. In our location, we usually had more ice than snow. Ice would accumulate on the telephone and light wires, breaking them down in numerous places. Sometimes telephone poles would snap in half like toothpicks and have to be replaced. There were times that we would go weeks and even months without telephone service. I recall Mr. Lee Crosslin working to restore service, usually by himself. He used to have an old open Buick, a 1920's vintage, that he used like a truck, hauling tools and wire and snaking poles along the road. By the way, I still have that old telephone as a reminder that we are now living in the "good ole days"!

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At hog-killing time each year, neighbors would help each other and go home with fresh meat for supper. After butchering, the meat was laid out on the roof of the smoke house overnight to cool and salted down the next day. My grandmother's job was to make a big batch of lye soap. I can almost see her now with her sunbonnet on, standing by the fire, stirring the boiling contents of the big, black iron pot. She would then cut the soap into big blocks and use it to wash clothes. Also, it was used by some to kill lice in children's hair and to dry up poison oak rashes and the like. It was strong stuff! It would almost take the skin off! But I used to think that it smelled so good!

We sold milk, cattle, and pigs. My mother sold eggs and, sometimes, hens and chickens to the Fosterville store or to the peddler who came by in his old beat up, converted school bus in exchange for sugar, flour, and other staples.

Winters seemed much more severe in those days. Our large stock pool was usually frozen over with ice thick enough to walk on. We had to take an axe and chop holes in the ice for the cattle to drink, and by the next day, it was frozen over again. It usually snowed several times. The deepest snows that I remember were seven or eight inches. We always made snow cream with fresh snow, and I would usually "pig out" and eat so much that my head would ache. We popped corn in the fireplace and made divinity candy.

It was cold in the house, too. There was no such thing as insulation, storm windows, or central heat in our old house. Neither was the old house under-penned and so the floors were always cold. We tried to block out all the cold air we could by stuffing the cracks in the doors and windows with old newspapers and rags. We heated with two wood-burning fireplaces. At night, we would gather as close as we could to the fire while listening to the radio. We had to sit close to the fire to benefit from the heat. My dad would usually sit reading with his straight chair leaned back and his feet propped on the wall next to the fireplace. My mother and grandmother were usually sewing or quilting, and I was playing or drawing while lying on a rug on the cold floor. When bedtime came, I would stand in front of the fire and bake one side and then the other. Then, I would run as fast as I could and jump into bed. It was a big, fluffy feather bed, and there were so many covers that it was a chore just to turn over or change positions. My grandmother would bring in the bucket of drinking water and set it down on the hearth in front of the fire to keep it from freezing. But usually in the night, when the temperature dropped down to below freezing, and the fire would die down in the fireplace, the water would freeze solid by morning. Sometimes we had to chisel the ice with the ice pick to get a drink of water. But this was better than frozen pipes!

I used to hear the old folks talk about it getting too cold to snow. I brought that up in class at school, and Mr. Bill Taylor referred to snow in Alaska at temperatures far below anything we experienced in Tennessee.

Mrs. Angie (Bikie) Lynch was there. This is where she was born and reared and

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spent her life. She experienced many Tennessee winters there, and this is the way she described them:

After the holidays, winter
with its quiet reality sets in.
We think of canned blackberries
capped with real whipped cream then.
In the 20's and 30's, winter in the country
was a lesson in survival it seems.
The commanding cold influenced our lives,
our thoughts and dreams.
The countryside was a light tan
except for those days the snow came and there was no sunshine.
Snow! We both loved it and hated it!
We wondered if we'd navigate or hibernate this time.
Many houses were old and drafty
and heat meant many trips to the woodpile.
Our chores about doubled
and not much was thought of style.
The fire went out in the kitchen stove,
and the north wind came in the crack.
Next morning the water bucket wouldn't let go of the dipper
'til the ice was whacked.
I can see that lone hay stack
with the precarious top
Because the long-haired cows
ate the bottom non-stop.
On rainy days my dad might patch a harness,
mend a gate, or be in a "feed early" mode.
Always in good humor, he often repeated,
"Rainy day and a muddy road, sorry team and a heavy load."
When everything was buttoned down,
lambs and calves had their dinner.
We'd warm our fanny by the hot fire, pop some corn,
play dominoes to see who was the winner.
Now in February we sometimes had to thaw
and the bottom of the feedlots were not to be found.
We'd wonder if spring was nearby,

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and when we could put potatoes in the ground.
Our emotions thawed too as we remembered
February was Cupid's time.
We knew we needed to get "crackin'", rain or shine.
So we want to ask you to be our special
Valentine as the season comes round.
Now go light on that chocolate candy
or you'll gain another pound!

Dog Days of Summer

There is the old saying in Tennessee that if you don't like the weather, just stick around a little while and it will change. It would often change from one extreme to the other in a few weeks. It could be freezing in January and February with snow on the ground as late as March or even April, but burning up with hot, sultry weather by July through the first part of September. It is the humidity that hurts more than the temperature. It could be ninety degrees in the shade but feel more like one hundred. These are called the "Dog Days of Summer". This has nothing to do with how dogs feel in the hot weather. The term comes from a bright star in the Canis Major by the name of Sirius. It is called the "big dog". It rises and sets in conjunction with the sun. The ancients thought that the heat generated by this star added to the heat of the sun caused the hottest period of the summer months. They were wrong, of course, but this is the origin of the term "dog days".

When I was a boy, it was hard work to keep cool, as well as "keeping your cool". The heat sometimes caused tempers to flare. It was a long time before air conditioning for the home. We didn't even have an electric fan at that time. We had to use advertising fans, folded newspapers, or pieces of cardboard to try to move some air. The house grew hot like an oven during the day in spite of several large shade trees. Often, in the evening, we would sit outside until it cooled off enough to go to bed. Many times, I would lie in bed with sweat rolling off. Moving the bed close to the open window to try to get a breath of fresh air didn't help much. There were the night sounds. Crickets singing and the summer frogs croaking at the nearby spring. It would be too hot to sleep. Sleep often would not come until the wee hours of the morning. Sometimes, my parents would gather their quilts and pillows and go out into the yard to sleep. This is something that could not be done in the city because of the lack of privacy. One hot night, they were trying to get some sleep in the front yard, in spite of the bugs and other things that roam around in the dark, when a car came up the driveway. With the headlights shining directly on them and in clear view of the occupants in the car, they grabbed their pallets and ran across the yard and into the house in their skimpy sleeping clothes. What a sight that must have been!

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Race Matters

I was brought up during the era that *Jim Crow* was alive and well. I remember the separate public restrooms and water fountains. Even then, I questioned in my own mind this custom. I never thought much about separate schools. It had just always been that way as far back as anyone could remember. They were supposed to be "separate but equal". I don't know if they were or not. Probably not. At church, when the black brethren visited, they sat together as a group in the back. I wondered why they did that. However, I found that when the whites visited a black church, they also, out of respect, sat in the back. I'm glad those days are forever gone. As the Bible teaches, we are all "one in Christ". There was a thing that happened in our community when I was a boy that I was ashamed of. There was a community picnic at Fosterville school. We enjoyed fellowship, plenty of good things to eat, ball games, a variety of contests, and games to play for prizes. One of the games was called "Hit the Trigger, Dunk the Nigger". A contraption was built with a large tank of water. A young Negro boy, whom I knew, sat on a bench above the water. Contestants would throw baseballs at a "bulls-eye", a small trigger, releasing the bench, and dumping him into the water. Some thought it was hilarious, but I did not see the fun in it. I felt sorry for him. I could not understand why my young black friend would submit himself to such humiliation. He must have needed badly what little money he was paid.

Growing up, I never knew a racist except, perhaps, for one or two, and they were not radical and full of hate like those portrayed on Television. As a boy, I often worked side-by-side with blacks in my uncle's hay field. They liked to tease me, and I tried to get back at them in one way or another. It was all in fun, for we were friends. The story about Uncle Sime Landum in the previous chapter, "Some Soapstone Sojourners", reveals, I believe, a great deal about the attitude of the majority of each race toward the other in our community during the thirties and forties.

One of my High School teachers was Mrs. Rutherford who was from the North. One day in class, she remarked how much she liked the people of the South. She said, "You know, I can walk down the street here in Christiana, and almost everyone I meet will smile and speak. Even the blacks! They don't do that where I came from!"

News From the Newspapers

Did you know that *Mutt and Jeff* was the first newspaper cartoon? This was around the turn of the century. According to my grandmother, my grandfather got a big kick out of this carton. I enjoyed the cartoons in the Sunday section of the *Nashville Tennessean*: *Dick Tracy*, *Little Orphan Annie*, *Smiling Jack Martin*,

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Blondie, Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse, Superman, and a host of others. I used to say that there was more truth in the cartoons than in the news section. By the way, *Dick Tracy* was way ahead of his time by predicting the wrist radio or cellular telephone.

Newspapers are, supposedly, unbiased and report just the facts. Now, that's a myth! Before radio and TV, we depended heavily upon newspapers for information about what was happening not only in our community, but in the world. However, it was not always accurate. I was always told, "You can't believe everything you read." Some of the tallest of tales could be found in the newspaper. In the magazine section of the *Nashville Tennessean* in the 1940's, there was a fantastic story that generated a lot of comment. It was the story of a girl who lived in the Millersburg community in the late 1800's who had a snake in her stomach! Once in a while, the snake would poke its head up the esophagus and into the mouth where it could be seen. It did not occur to some folks, and even in more modern times, that the acids in the stomach and digestive system would render this physically impossible. Mammy, who was reared in the same community, recalled hearing this story when young.

In the Murfreesboro *Daily News Journal*, there appeared the story of two men who reported to the Sheriff's office that they had come face-to-face with the Devil! These men were in a car in a field near Eagleville. It was dark, and, suddenly, they heard a noise outside the car. Looking around, they saw the ugliest face they had ever seen before, with large eyes, a long goatee, and horns growing out of its head. They also reported the smell of sulfur. They lost no time getting out of there and reporting the incident to the authorities. What did they really see that night? These two fellows were out in the farmer's field drinking, and what they actually saw turned out to be a billy goat!

Who can forget the picture of Harry S. Truman immediately after the election of 1948 with a delightful smile on his face, holding up a newspaper with the headlines, "Dewey Defeats Truman!"

Will Rogers, the beloved comedian, used to say: "All I know is what I read in newspapers." What I learned was: Don't believe everything you read, and take the rest with a grain of salt!

Water Witching

Ever watched a water witch work? Interesting. Water Witching, as it is commonly called, has nothing to do with witchcraft or the occult. It is not a miraculous gift nor power. It is a natural phenomenon found in the physical make-up of some people. In simple terms, it is the capability of locating underground streams of water with the use of the simplest tools - a forked stick or limb cut from a nearby tree. This ancient practice dates back to prehistoric times, and its prevalence has been found in most parts of the world. Yet, it has not been taken seriously by the world of science. I have no idea why it is called "Water Witching" unless, long ago, it came

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about from inadvertently dropping the "s" sound in pronouncing the word "switching". Thus, "switching for water" became "witching for water". Switching has to do with the employment of a green limb or switch in locating the stream. It is also called "dowsing" and "divining".

I have often wondered what attracted the early settlers to the hills of Middle Tennessee in the first place. Why did they choose the hills rather than the vast and fertile Jordan Valley, located just to the west? Maybe the reason was that the land was already settled or considered too expensive. Or maybe the answer was simpler. Could it not be that there was a class of settlers who just preferred the hills? Many still do. Most of these settlers had come from the mountains and hills of North Carolina, and they had livestock that needed an abundance of grass and water. In other places, the water was underground and hard to get to. But in the hills, there was an abundance of good water and flowing springs. Nearly every farm had one or more springs. Some of the springs came from caves. Others were protected by springhouses built of logs or native stone. Just about every springhouse had a gourd or metal dipper hanging on the wall so that people passing by could stop for a drink of cool, refreshing water. There was usually a pipe that led to a small pool or trough for the cattle. The air was cool and filled with the sweet-smelling fragrance of mint, wild flowers, and other water-loving plants. The only drawback was that, in a dry summer, water could become scarce and even dry up altogether.

Some dug wells to supplement the water supply. These were large, open wells lined with native stone, built by slave labor. But, because of huge layers of limestone rock, these walls were hard to dig by hand and were not very deep. They usually produced only enough water for moderate household use. One such well was found near the courthouse in Murfreesboro and restored. In time, gasoline-powered drilling rigs came into use, and nearly everyone had one or more wells drilled. There were two wells on our place. One produced white sulfur water. It was drawn out with a rope and well bucket. We only used it for drinking.

Sometimes, though, a newly-drilled well would be dry or not produce enough water to be worthwhile. The idea that water can be found anywhere is not true. In some places, it is easily found, but in other places, it is not. The problem is where to drill. That is how the "dowser" or "Water Witch" made his living. He claimed the ability to find the best location for a well by using a forked stick and, if he were well-experienced, could even estimate how far down one needed to go to reach it. Sometimes, the "dowser" was the well-driller, himself.

I used to not believe in water witching. I could not understand how in the world it could be possible for someone with a skinny stick in his hands to located water where there was no evidence of any. It just didn't made any sense to me. But there are a lot of things in life that don't make sense but prove to be true. Dowsing water, I learned, was one of them.

As a young preacher, I was in a gospel meeting in central Kentucky. I was

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staying with a farmer during that week. Somehow, the subject of water witching came up, and I spoke up, voicing my opinion that there could not be such a thing. I guess I came across to that old farmer as a "know-it-all". But, he let me have my say. When I finished, he got up out of his chair and invited me to come outside with him. Without saying a word, he went over to a tree and cut off a forked limb. He cleaned off the leaves with his pocketknife and handed the limb over to me.

"What do you want me to do with this thing? I asked.

"Well, I know where there is a strong underground stream in this yard, and I want you to take this stick and see if you can find it."

I chuckled to myself. "What a waste of time," I thought. But, to humor the old man, who was, after all, my host, I took the stick into my hands and held it exactly as he told me to. "Now hold that stick like I tell you," he said. "Let it point upward and hold the ends as tight as you can and walk across this yard."

I started out, chuckling to myself, thinking about how silly I must look. I was hoping that no one who knew me would drive by and see me. Suddenly, to my utter astonishment, the stick began to bend backward toward my body. It was as though it had a mind of its own. I tried with all my might to hold it still, but it kept on moving. It bent back and pointed toward my chest and, as I kept moving forward, it continued to bend until it was pointing directly to the ground. I tried approaching from other directions, but it would always point to the same spot. "That's it!" the old man exclaimed. "That's where the underground stream is. You found it!"

I was fascinated. I knew it was no trick. How could such a thing happen? I continued to play around with it during that week. I found that just about any kind of stick would work, as long as there is sap in it. I also found that, when the pull is strong enough, the limb would actually twist in two in my hands. Sometimes, the bark would come off, and the palms of my hands would become reddened and raw from trying to hold the stick so tightly. Not everyone has that ability, I learned. It doesn't work for everyone. But another mysterious thing is that I can stand behind a person who is not having results and reach around and just lightly touch the limb at both ends, and it will begin to twist.

What is the explanation? I have no idea. All I know is that it works for me. Whatever it is, it is God's doings. God wanted all the earth inhabited and so mankind was scattered to the "four corners". But much of the earth is dry and arid, and water is necessary for life to exist. Wild animals have special water-locating senses, and I believe that God has given special abilities to certain individuals. Science does not have an answer for everything. The lesson we should learn is to never make light of something that we do not quite understand.

CHAPTER IX

MULES AND MORE

*"For every beast of the forest is mine,
and the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Psalm 50:10)*



"Old Matt" Helen Ryan, 1981

Most everyone is familiar with the childhood song "Old McDonald Had a Farm". As the song goes on, several farm animals are named--cow, horse, pig, etc.--and the children would mimic each one. It was a fun song, especially when it got to mimicking the mule. Well, most Tennessee farms had those kinds of animals. They were our livestock--our livelihood. My dad was a livestock man. He loved his livestock. He was brought up in a generation that depended upon *horse* power; that is, *real* horse (or mule) power, as well as *man* power. He never owned a tractor. In the hills, horses or mules were more efficient than tractors.

The mule is affectionately nicknamed "long ears". He is an unusual animal. His ancestry goes back many centuries, and he has been a beast-of-burden in many parts of the world. Once upon a time, though, the mule was considered a regal animal. Kings rode upon mules, and before that, it was the donkey. The horse represented war; the mule or donkey, peace and prosperity. The mule is a hybrid, a cross between a jackass (a male donkey) and a mare. Physically, he is different-looking, with long ears, a uniquely-shaped head, a tuft of long hairs at the end of the tail, a short mane, and small hoofs. He has an unusual braying voice, inherited from the donkey. He can attain a height of 16 hands (a hand is a unit of length equal to 4 inches). All male mules

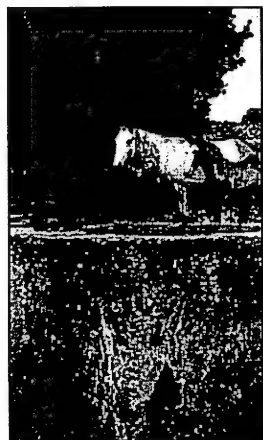


*James Deaton and Jeanette Gipson, my
future wife (mule unknown)*

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and most female mules, like all hybrids, are sterile. They do not reproduce. They are known for being sure-footed. Mules used to transport tourists down into the Grand Canyon because of their sure-footedness and trustworthiness. They are resistant to disease and more easily fed than a horse. A mule is prized also for its marvelous intelligence. On the other hand, he can be obstinate in disposition. If a mule decides not to move, there is not much that can be done to make him. That is probably how the term "mule-headed" originated. A male mule can even become vicious and troublesome. They have been known to kick and bite; thus, the expression "mean as a mule". Mules are easily scared by unusual sights and sounds. All in all, though, mules are perfectly adaptable to hill country. Horses and mules are not compatible and cannot work well together as a team because of the difference in stride. Mules need to be paired together. In this age of mechanization, mules have been mostly retired, but they still have many admirers. The annual Mule Day in Columbia, Tennessee has been a tradition since about 1840.

One day, my dad and I rode Bess, one of our mares, to an adjoining farm to get some of his young mules and drive them home. He instructed me to stay on Bess while he opened the gate to let the mules out. His idea was that they would see the mare and follow her. They did see her, but they became excited. Bess was nervous and stood there, trembling. I was talking to her, trying to calm her down. All of a sudden, she could stand it no longer and took off running. I was riding bare-back and had trouble staying on. I dropped the reins and grabbed her around the neck and held on for dear life. Dad was running behind us, but soon, we left him in the dust. Suddenly, though, it seemed that she realized what she was doing and stopped. I just rolled off. I decided that it would be just as well for me to walk back home. Anyway, I needed the exercise.



*Old Lady, Scout,
and Bess at the pool*

The Great Mule Race

Bubba Woodfin, owner of the Woodfin Funeral Home in Murfreesboro, is a friend of mine. The Woodfins are well known in the Fosterville Community. His father, John, was in the funeral home business for more than fifty years. Their ancestors and other relatives once lived in the Fosterville area where there is a Woodfin cemetery. He related an incident that happened in the early fifties. He attended a community picnic at the Fosterville school where there were several

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contests that tested skills. There was the greasy pig contest and a horse and mule race. Macon Brothers came up to him and asked: "Can you ride a mule?" He replied, "Sure, I can ride any mule." Macon went on to say that he had a short-legged mule named Little Red that could outrun any horse or mule anywhere around. "Will you ride him?" he asked. Bubba agreed to ride the mule. . . and guess what? He won first prize! He said, "I'll never forget. I won a pair of Duck Head overalls and a sack of horse and mule feed from Harris and Watkins' store!" A city slicker outrunning a bunch of country boys on a mule? Hmmm.

There is the story of a circus coming to town with a parade of beautiful, decorated wagons pulled by large puncheon horses with silver-studded harnesses and colorful tassels waving above their heads. A wheel of one of the heavy wagons dropped into a ditch, and the horses, although huge, were unable to pull it out. They just pranced around. The driver of the circus wagon was undecided what to do. An old farmer drove up in a broken-down wagon pulled by two spindle-legged mules stopped and offered his assistance. The circus man was dubious, but not knowing what else to do, he decided to let the old man try. Taking his time, he unhitched his team of mules and hitched them to the circus wagon. He climbed up into the seat and clucked to his mules, and they began pulling with all their might. Sweat glistened on their coats in the sun, and their muscles bulged as they pulled. They struggled with the heavy load, but slowly they succeeded in pulling the wagon out of the hole. As they were going along down the road, the old farmer was sitting in the seat singing "Blest Be the Tie That Binds". I used to use this as an illustration of what can be accomplished when there is unity and people work together like a good team of mules.

That story reminds me of Rat and Jack and Dad's rickety old wagon. When he hauled a heavy load of hay or wood and was going up a hill, my job as a small boy was to walk behind and scotch the wheels with big rocks when the mules needed to stop and rest. The old wagon wheels were of wood and had steel tires. Sometimes, they would get loose, and Dad would take a hub wrench and take off the wheel, lay it on the ground, and hammer the tire back into place. Then, he would take it to the pool and soak it in water overnight, causing the wood to swell to tighten the tire. I have the hub of one of the wheels of that old broken-down wagon that my mother made into a holder for a cigarette ashtray. Also, I have the collars and bits and harnesses worn by Rat and Jack.

Dad raised two more of those ornery critters, Hitler and Mussolini, which he sold. The mothers where work horses, Old Lady and Bess. Old Lady was like a family pet. Rat and Jack were getting old, and dad needed good, strong work horses to replace them. He decided on mares to raise colts. There was a shipment of young work horses that came by train to Murfreesboro from Texas. We went to the stock yards where he picked out a solid white young mare, and we brought her home where she lived for the next thirty years. Her teammate was Bess that dad had bought from

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Aunt Grace. Old Lady proved to be everything my dad wanted in a work horse. She was strong and reliable and raised several colts. Among them was a horse named Scout that my parents gave to me. I sold him for \$50.

Old Lady was gentle and could be led by just holding to her mane. She allowed me to ride her bare-back, sometimes to the country store with my dog, Highway, tagging along behind. I was short and she was tall; so I had to climb up onto a gate or something else to get on. She was willing to indulge me to a point. However, she let me know without any doubt that she was the boss. Sometimes in playing cowboys and Indians, I would use her to ride, like "*Hi-ho, Silver!*" I would try to get her to run like the cowboy horses I saw in the movies, or at least to trot, but she refused. She just lumbered along slowly, "ho-hum", taking her time. She certainly didn't claim kin to a Tennessee walking horse, either. When she did trot, she bounced me straight up and down. It was a rough ride. And, when she was ready to quit, she quit. She wasn't about to let a snot-headed kid tell her what to do.

Dad bought his first herd of dairy cows in 1929 after he and Mom returned from Toledo. From that time on, until after his retirement, he owned milk cows. One time, he got sick and had to go into the hospital. While he was gone, my mom took the initiative and sold every cow that he had! It wasn't long, though, before he had another herd.

Did you know that cows have personality? Oh, yes they do! Just like humans, one cow can stand out from all others by personality. One cow I especially remember was "Old Punk". In every herd, there is one cow that is dominant. Old Punk was that kind of cow. She bossed all the other cows around and always took the lead. Dad had some pumpkins stored in one of the stalls in the barn that he planned on selling. Punk got the door open and ate most of them. That's how she got her name. She also did not like fences. None could hold her for long. To her, the grass was always greener on the other side.

No animal on earth, except maybe the camel, is more contrary than the common cow. The cow is a beast that could test the patience of Job. Dad could have told all about that. I used to help drive heifers to pasture and have seen one or more "sull". Deciding to be difficult, she would lie down in the middle of the road and refuse to budge. Dad, though, had a remedy. He had a way of twisting her tail to change her mind. Bulls can also be contrary and sometimes mean. I was always taught to be careful around bulls, even though they may appear to be docile. One could turn on you in a heartbeat. I have had friends injured and sometimes killed by bulls.

How to Milk a Cow

How do you go about milking a cow? Answer: *Verrrry* carefully. I am sure this is something that you, reader, have always wanted to know! Maybe not. Anyway, I am going to let you in on the art of milking a cow-the old-fashioned way. In a

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scrapbook my mother kept for me, she made this entry:

Since school closed the 1941-'42 term, Roy, Jr. is learning to milk. He helped his dad plant corn May 26th. That was his first day to work in the field. He planted corn all day and dreamed about plowing Bess all night. He got a nice sun tan from his day's work. He learned to milk this vacation.

I never became a fast milker like my dad, but there are some basics to milking that I learned. First, you need to get acquainted with a new cow. Most cows don't like strangers milking them. I have seen a cow turn her head around to identify the milker, and if it wasn't someone she knew, start kicking. It is also important to know which side of the cow to milk from. The cow knows. It is always on the cow's right side. Try it on the other side and you will likely get kicked where it hurts! You step up to the right side and push on the cow's hip until she obligingly backs up her leg, and then you are ready to get started. There is before you the cow's udder, sometimes called "bag" with four teats, swollen almost stiff with milk. You sit on a stool or a feed bucket and milk with both hands, although I had often seen my grandmother stand, bend over, and milk with just one hand. She was about as fast as my dad. Sometimes, though, the cow becomes impatient and kicks over the bucket of milk. It seemed that she always knew when the bucket was about full and would then kick, almost planned. So, you have to hold the bucket securely between your knees. Also, there's the problem of the cow swishing flies with her tail. It is usually full of cockleburrs, and when it hits the head or back of the neck, believe me, it hurts! To keep this from happening, the tail has to be carefully tucked under the bend of the left knee. The goal is to make the cow feel contented. The udder washed, the flies sprayed, some grain and hay given, and you milk as she munches. This is important. If the cow is nervous or discontented, she will hold up her milk, and this could cause health problems for her and some bruises for you. Milking by hand in the winter time was especially difficult. Besides mud almost knee-deep, there is the cold. Just get freezing milk on your hands. It's painful!

When I used to help with the milking, a good milk cow would just about fill a three-gallon milk bucket. The bucket of milk was then taken and poured through a strainer into a ten gallon milk can. At night, the cans of milk were kept cool in the spring, wrapped in burlap bags. The next morning after milking, the cans of milk were taken down to the road where they were picked up by Arthur Richardson, our neighbor and milk man, and taken to the processing plant in Bell Buckle. There were a few times that I helped him haul milk. Lifting those ten-gallon cans of milk was a heavy job for a young kid.

My parents, my mother in particular, were determined that I graduate from David Lipscomb College in Nashville. They began early in making plans. We knew

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nothing of student loans. We might have gone to the bank and borrowed money on a personal loan, but they didn't like that idea. There's always pay-back time with interest! So, they made other plans and started at an early age. They gave me a calf, and the calf grew into a cow and had other calves. They opened a bank account for me at Murfreesboro Bank and Trust Company and taught me the importance of saving. Later, when I was a teenager, I bought a pure-bred Holstein calf from Uncle Dorris Powell who had bought a truck load from Wisconsin. She cost \$60 and was named Daisy. This was the beginning of a small Holstein herd. I belonged to the 4-H Club and FFA and was proud of my cows. I have often said that those cows sent me to college. Mom and Dad milked and fed my cows while I was away. I graduated without owing a dime. I didn't have but a couple of hundred dollars left in the bank, but I didn't owe anything for four years of college.

My parents gave me a pig to raise. That was one of my 4-H Club projects. I fed and looked after it until he topped out at about 200 pounds. That's when pigs were usually sent to market. I felt pretty good about it. I made a little money on that project and began thinking about next time raising maybe a half dozen pigs. I could just see dollar signs in my head. I bought the pigs, purchased feed for them and kept a record of expenses. When they were sent to market, I discovered, to my dismay, that I had lost money. That was the end of my pig business!

One time, we had a young cow to go missing. For several days, I looked for her not only on our place but on the neighbor's land, as well. Finally, I found her, still alive, in a sinkhole. She had gotten down under an overhanging ridge of dirt in a cramped position and couldn't get up. My dad and I hitched up Old Lady to a sled and went and pulled her out of the hole. She couldn't walk or even stand. So, we loaded her on the sled and took her to the barn. It was my job twice a day to hoist her up by rope and tackle and massage her legs. After several days, she began to regain strength. At first, she was able to stand for a little while. Then she was able to take a few steps. Finally, she walked. It took a lot of work, but she lived for several years after that and made a good cow. When there were animals on the farm, there was always work to do. They got sick and needed nursing. Sometimes, cows had to have help birthing. We used home remedies for them, just as we did ourselves.

After working in Tullahoma, my dad went to work for Mr. Albert Alderson at the Union Stock Yards in Nashville where he stayed until his retirement. Mr. Albert, our neighbor, would pick him up every morning and had him do all the driving. He would not let any of the other men drive because of their drinking habits, not even his son, Ben. They drove to Nashville, about fifty miles away, daily in all kinds of weather. In the winter, ice was treacherous. Several times, they hit pockets of ice and spun around in the highway, but they never had an accident-not even a fender-bender. Dad was a good driver. One time, during the war, they didn't make it home because of a huge movement of troops by convoy on the highway. They stayed in a motel and Mom and I had to do all the milking that night. I liked riding with them on

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the old Nashville Highway because it was like riding a roller coaster. Going over a sharp rise at sixty miles per hour made you experience a little feeling of weightlessness. Mr. Albert was good to his employees. He kept Dad in the hats that cattlemen wore. Dad worked his way up to hog salesman. For this, he was especially adept for his knowledge of animals, his ability to accurately estimate weight, his talent of calculating numbers in his mind, and his friendliness. People often called Dad on the phone at night to ask about the price of hogs and his advice on marketing. He loved his work.

Mammy loved cattle, too. She never missed a daily market report on WSM-AM radio from the Union Stockyards. We used to tease her about it. "You would think", we would say, "that you have a large herd of cattle ready for market, the way you keep up with the market reports." To that, she would explain that, since she had sons and sons-in-law who were farmers and a son-in-law who worked at the stockyards, she would like to know what was happening in the market place so that she could talk intelligently about it. She was always interested in what her family was involved in.

Most farmers in our neighborhood raised cattle, hogs, and sheep and sent them to market at the Union Stockyards. In fact, one time, it was considered the most important livestock market in the Southeast. It was a noisy, bustling, busy place. The tin-roofed stock pens covered about ten acres. It dated back to the 1919 consolidation of several smaller stockyards. There were several commission firms, one of them being Perry and Alderson. Dad worked with this firm until it went out of business after the death of Mr. Albert, and then he worked for the firm of Moore and Moore. After Mr. Albert died, my dad bought a 1976 GMC pickup truck and started hauling cattle as he went to work daily. Long before this, though, I would sometimes go with him to work and stay all day. I would see long lines of stock trucks loaded with cattle, hogs, and sheep extending almost all the way back to the Nashville Court House. There were occasions that cattle would get loose and scatter along the streets. One day, several steers got loose, and the Stockyard workers, aided by the police, chased after them through the streets all the way to the Vanderbilt University campus where they finally rounded them up. Yes, things could get exciting at the Union Stockyards.

The Union Stockyards went out of business in November 1974. The original office building still stands, having been converted into a high-class restaurant called, of course, "The Stockyards", featuring steak on its menu. It is located at 901 Second Avenue, North.

CHAPTER X

JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT

*"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine:
but a broken spirit drieth the bones." (Prov. 17:22)*



*Roy, Jr. and
Milton Powell in the old pool*

I was brought up on the sunny side of Soapstone. (All sides, though, were sunny, even when mist hung low, obscuring the top.) It was a happy place—a good place for a boy to grow up. Younger generations hear talk about the hard times we went through and get the idea that life back then must have been awfully dull. They wonder what we did for fun. Ah, yes, we did have fun—good, wholesome fun. Even when money was scarce and the times were tough, we found ways to have a barrel of fun. For the most part, we made our own fun. We didn't need, nor could anyone afford, paying for a professional activities director. We directed our own activities under the supervision of our parents. I have already mentioned the excursions up Soapstone and other surrounding hills, the picnics and wiener roasts. The boys my age played "Cowboys and Indians" or "Army", fighting against the Germans and the Japs. The girls had their dolls and played

house among the rocks under the trees with cast off broken plates, cups, and saucers. Sometimes, the boys would join them for tea and mud pies. We rode our bicycles and played baseball and touch football. At school recess, the boys played marbles and the girls played jacks and skipped rope. Sometimes, we all played "Anti-over", "King of the Mountain" and "Hide-and-Seek". There were organized games and some games of our own invention. At home, we had a large cattle pool that often served as a swimming pool for the community children in the good old summertime. Also, there were the High School baseball and basketball games that were usually well-supported. Uncle Hugh Beasley was always there. I do not recall anyone who enjoyed a basketball game better than he. He would not miss a game if he could help it. When the home team scored, he would cheer and throw his old, battered hat up to the ceiling of the gym. He could be heard cheering and shouting encouragement all over the gym. I think that a lot of folk got about as much enjoyment from the antics of Uncle Hugh as they did from watching the game. It was just for fun.

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There were plenty of things to do for fun, even in the wintertime. Winters were cold, and we usually had plenty of ice and some snow on the ground. Ice was worse than snow. We were always slipping and sliding around, trying to get from one place to another. Up above the house, on the side of the hill, was a wet-weather spring. Usually, it ran during the winter months and froze over. I couldn't afford a sled, and so I improvised. I converted an old discarded high-back chair into a sled, and we boys would take turns sliding down the hill. What fun!

One day, Milton Wyatt Powell, Franklin Smith, and I were roaming the hills. We went up to the top of Bald Knob and made our way down an old abandoned wagon road through Powell Brother's farm. We came out onto the graveled Short Creek/Fosterville Road and, passing by a neighbor's house, saw that he had two or three old buggies sitting around. Just what we needed! We pooled our money and bought one of the buggies for about \$2.50. It was in fair shape except for no top and one wheel being out of round due to a missing spoke or two. We pushed the buggy to Milt's house where he had a riding horse named Jim. We improvised a harness out of ropes, bailing wire, toe sacks, and whatever else we could find and hitched the horse to the buggy. We headed for Fosterville. We rode around for a while and, when it started getting late, headed for home. Franklin got off first, then me, leaving Milt to go on home by himself. All went well at first. His parents, who had been to town, came along in their car and passed him. I guess they were shocked to see Milt driving an old buggy. At the top of the hill, before reaching home, his dad stopped the car and went back to see how he was progressing. About that time, one of the staves dropped down into the gravel and scared Jim. He started running, and Milt was helpless in controlling him. Seeing what was happening, his dad started waving his arms, trying to stop the horse, but he just ran around him and the parked car, up along the side of an embankment, tipping the buggy over and dumping Milton Wyatt into the middle of the road. He suffered a deep gash in his leg, and the old buggy was a mess. His dad told me that Jim had never before been hitched to a wagon or buggy.

But, we were not to be out-done. We had other plans for that old buggy. We got together and pushed it to my house and made some repairs. It still had that out-of-round back wheel which made for an interesting ride. We took off what remained of the staves and attached rope to both ends of the front axle so that we could guide it from the seat. Then, with someone in the seat steering, we pushed it down the long hill in the road in front of our house. What a great ride it was! Going downhill, it picked up speed. With the cool wind blowing in our faces, it almost felt like we were flying. The out-of-round rear wheel going *thumpety-thump-thump*, bumping the riders up and down. It was nearly as thrilling as one of those rides at the fair. At the end, we would simply run it into a ditch to get stopped. We would, of course, have to push it back up the hill to be ridden again. For weeks, nearly every kid in the community had fun riding on the old buggy until it finally fell apart.

Don Powell lived on Highway 231, about a mile west of Fosterville. Often, I

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would ride my bicycle over to his house, and we would play and sometimes get into some mischief when Aunt Emma wasn't watching. There were lots of travelers from northern states using Highway 231 to go to Florida. Uncle Jordan had just bought a new suit, and the nice box that it came in was there. We hit upon an idea to have some fun. We took the box and tied a rope to it and placed it in the middle of the highway. Then, we hid in some nearby bushes and waited. Several cars and trucks whizzed by, but, sure enough, it wasn't long before a car came along and screeched to a stop. A man got out and walked back to where the box laid. Just as he stooped over to pick it up, we jerked the rope. You can imagine the surprised look on his face. I don't know what he did or said. I can only imagine, for we took off running through the woods, giggling as we ran.

Christmas was always a special time in our house. We had plenty of fruit and sweets to eat. Christmas dinner was always special. My dad and I would go out into the woods and cut down a small cedar tree. We would bring it home, and my mother would sprinkle flour on it to make it look white like snow. We strung popcorn on long strings and wrapped it around the tree. Except for a few colorful balls that we bought at the store, that's all we had. One Christmas, before going to bed, I left an apple with a note, "For Santa Claus". The next morning, there were lots of presents under the tree, but the apple was still there. I couldn't understand why Santa didn't like my present.

Halloween was always a fun time. Some of us kids would buy masks for a dime and cover ourselves with old sheets and walk up and down the country road making all kinds of weird noises. I don't recall getting any treats, but we didn't play many tricks. Oh, we might have turned over some yard furniture or did something else to let folks know that they had had visitors from the beyond, but we didn't do any damage to anyone's property. We were taught better. However, some who were more rambunctious would make off with a farmer's gate, allowing his cattle to stray, knock down a mailbox or spread paint on a car. Mr. Huse Harris had a pony buggy, and one Halloween, some energetic boys placed the buggy on top of the Depot. It remained there until Mr. Harris figured out how to get it down.

Toys 'R Us

I had toys, lots of toys. Nothing expensive, but still satisfying to an energetic, growing boy. At Christmas time, there were always toys and games under the tree. During our occasional trips to town, I was always given a little money, and I would head for the toy section of Woodworth's on the square. I took my time in picking out a small toy truck or car made of metal or rubber. During the war, however, metal and rubber became rationed, and toys were made of wood or cardboard. One Christmas, I got a cardboard jeep that had to be assembled. Model airplanes were made of cardboard that had to be punched out and put together. But those planes could really

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be made to fly at the end of a string twirled around over the head at the end of a long stick. They were models of WWII fighter plans, and they could be made to dive, loop, land, and take off. Ah, what fun!

There was only one toy that I remember I always wanted but never received. It was a Lionel electric train set. My cousin, Harold Beasley, had one, and I wanted one badly. I would browse through the Christmas Sears Roebuck "Wish Book" each year and pick out the one that I wanted. But dear old Santa failed to deliver, and I would think, "Oh, well, maybe next year." I realized, though, even at that young age, that the cost was prohibitive. It was close to \$100!

Homemade Fun

Of all the toys I had, though, as a child, the ones I enjoyed the most were the ones I made and cost nothing. One of my earliest memories is of being in the loft of the barn with my daddy. He took out his pocket knife and put together a horse made of corn stalks. I thought that was the neatest thing I had ever seen. On another occasion, he took his pocketknife and made me a whistle out of a hickory stick cut from the limb of a tree. As a toddler, I rode around on Old Nelly, my stick horse.

As I grew older, we boys made sling shots with forked sticks and rubber strips cut from old worn-out tire inner tubes. I often cut out pistols and rifles from old pieces of lumber I found lying around. Once, I combined a wooden pistol with a sling shot and had a gun that would really shoot. I also made a paper-wad shooter out of a piece of cane and a plunger. It didn't go over too well with the teacher at school. During the war, I received a toy military cannon made of wood. One day, I got a piece of half-inch water pipe and found that it could replace the wooden barrel of the cannon. I then got some firecrackers and marbles, and I had a toy cannon that would really shoot. I would aim at the side of the barn. Our daughter, Danette, lives on the farm and often finds marbles that I used as ammunition.

Although I had a couple of store-bought wind-up power boats I used in the cattle pool, the most fun I had was with the boats I made from scrap lumber with sails on them, like old pirate ships. A playmate and I also had fun with our own communications set-up. It consisted of two tin cans and a long string. We strung the string from the barn to the house, about 200 feet, and talked back and forth to each other. "Can you hear me now?" Talk about hi-tech!

Up on a hill, we usually had a brisk breeze blowing. In the spring, I enjoyed flying kites. I made my own from old newspapers or brown bags and a couple of sticks. My mother taught me how to make paste from flour, and I would make a tail from scrap cloth or an old discarded neck tie. Mammy always saved string, and she had a big ball of it. With a good breeze blowing on the hillside, I was ready to fly my homemade kite. Sometimes, though, there were problems. The string would break or the kite would end up in a tree. But, often, I would have success and proudly watch

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my kite sail high into the sky. I thought of Benjamin Franklin flying his homemade kite during a thunderstorm while experimenting with electricity.

What do you do with an empty wooden spool that thread came on, a match stick, a rubber band, and a piece of coloring crayon? Why, you build a tank, of course! The ends of the spool were notched to give it traction. The rubber band was stuck through the hole in the middle of the spool and secured on one end by a piece of a match stick notched into the side of the spool. On the other side was the piece of crayon to give it lubrication, and the longer matchstick to stabilize and give it motion. Wind it up and let it go! It would go over the ground and across the floor and climb over obstacles. Modern kids who must have store-bought toys that cost a fortune really don't know what fun is! Making your own toys and using make-believe was half the fun.

Some Special Friends

I have always had a soft spot in my heart for animals, even for animals of the wild. I never took to hunting as a sport because I could never bring myself to kill an animal without the need to do so. I have always enjoyed pets. I was an only child with no siblings to play with, and so I bonded with my pets. My first dog when I was a baby was Brownie. Then came Slick. I would often come home from school lugging a stray cat. At one time, we had ten or twelve cats at home, and I would not let my parents give one away. I also had other dogs. There was Highway, so named because my mother and dad found him abandoned on the highway. He was a mixed-breed, but favored a small German Shepherd. He was in poor shape when they found him, without much fur left due to a severe case of mange. However, we doctored him with home remedies, fed him well, and gave him a lot of love and attention. His health began slowly to improve. It was about this time that I got my first second-hand bicycle, and Highway began following me wherever I went. My dad said that is when he really began to get well. He would go with me every afternoon to get the cows. Each afternoon, he would go down the road and lie down and wait for me to come home on the school bus. He loved to go to the store with me. I would buy a little candy or some other goodies and share it with him. Some of the young men loafing around the stores at Fosterville offered me money if I would allow them to tie a tin can to Highway's tail and watch him run. Foolishly, I gave them permission. But Highway was smart. He would run only a little way and then lie down under a shade tree and wait for me to come along, always greeting me with a smile. I would buy candy, cookies, and other goodies with the money, and we would sit under a tree and have a feast. I think Highway soon caught on that this was a game, but I have always regretted doing this at his expense. It was hard on me when he died. He was shot by a neighbor lady. I had just become a Christian, and this was a test of faith, for it was something hard for a twelve-year-old to forgive.

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Another dog that I owned was Jerry. Jerry was a beautiful dog-a full-blooded English Shepherd. He was seven weeks old when we ordered him from a breeder in Missouri for \$25. Billie Fulton and I rode the milk truck to Bell Buckle to get him at the Railway Express. He was good with cattle. I taught him several tricks such as jumping through the loop and fetch. But I was older and didn't spend as much time with him as I did Highway. Soon, he was joined by Bingo, a mixed-breed. Bingo was given to me by Charles Anderson Beasley, another first cousin. He and I brought him home in a box on the train one rainy afternoon in October, 1945. My uncle Elmo Beasley called him "Pup, Jr" for he thought he was the son of his dog "Pup". My mother used to tease me by calling him BB brain. I'd reply, "He's no BB brain, Mom! He's just different!" Jerry and Bingo loved to run and play together. Bingo was about half the size of Jerry and could not run as fast. But he had a solution. He would grip Jerry's tail and let him pull him along! When they ran around the corner of the house, Bingo would be air-borne for a few seconds and swing wide. But he held on. Now, does that sound like a BB brain?

Jerry and Bingo got a new playmate. It was a little ewe lamb that never quite figured out just what she was. Uncle Wallis gave me this little newborn lamb whose mother had died. I took her home with me, and we raised her on cow's milk. She grew up in the company of the two dogs and loved to play with them. They would all run together and chase one another. The lamb would chase the dogs for a while and then it was the dogs' turn. Jerry and Bingo accepted the lamb as belonging and never attempted to harm her. When not playing with the dogs, the lamb would go with the cows and graze on the hillside. My folks decided that it would be better for the lamb as it matured to be with other sheep. I sold the lamb to Uncle Dorris for a few dollars on the condition that he keep her and never send her to market. Later, when I saw Uncle Dorris, I asked him about the lamb, and he said, "I've never seen anything like it. That lamb won't have anything to do with the other sheep. It just stays with the cows!"

Jerry was poisoned March 24, 1949. Bingo was poisoned the following year. Some of the farmers were losing their sheep to wild dogs or coyotes. Some of them went "half-cocked" trying to kill every dog in the community, but, as usual, they never got the guilty ones.

One day, one of the Morgan boys brought a baby squirrel to school. It was love at first sight. What a neat pet, I thought. So, I swapped him something, perhaps some marbles, or maybe my lunch money, for the squirrel. I put it in my jacket when I started home. She and I bonded quickly. She would poke her head out the front of my jacket and watch where we were going. I named her Skippy, and soon she became a lovable part of the family. We spent many hours together playing. Often, she would jump up on my shoulder for a ride. Skippy learned to communicate to us that she was hungry. She would station herself in front of us and sit up using her front paws as if she were eating. We got the message. When my grandmother received letters from

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her children and other relatives, she had the habit of sitting in her chair and dropping the pages on the floor as she read to be picked up later. But the pages kept disappearing. It was Skippy. She was swiping the pages, tearing them to small pieces, and building a nest behind an old trunk. But, sadly, one morning, Skippy was not in her nest, nor was she to be found anywhere. She was gone, never to be seen again. I was hopeful that she decided to go back into the wild, meet a daddy squirrel, and start a family.

Let's Go to the Movies

Often, on Sundays, when Dad's work was caught up, we would go to town. While my parents did their shopping and other business, I would go the movies. There were two theaters, the Roxy and the Princess. I would get out of one and go to the other. Both had Saturday matinees, usually a Western, with stars such as Gene Autry, Tom Mix, and Roy Rogers. Serials such as Buck Rogers always ended with cliff-hangers that made me want to come back the next Saturday to see how the hero escaped the villain. There were also newsreels and cartoons of Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, or some other comic strip characters. The cost was only about a quarter, and a bag of popcorn and a coke, fifteen or twenty cents. I went to see *"Gone With The Wind"* when it was first released. It was a long, sad movie, and so I took a couple of hamburgers from Aunt Seula Lamb's restaurant and ate a while and cried a while.

Often, in the summer, movies would come to the Fosterville school house. Some entrepreneur would haul in the equipment and show a movie one night a week, charging a small fee. Popcorn and soft drinks were also available. It was good entertainment.

The Grand Ole Opry

We were fortunate to have the famous Grand Ole Opry so near in the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. Fans would travel from far and near just to attend a Saturday night performance in the famous Ryman Auditorium hosted by the "Solemn Old Judge", George D. Hay and David Cobb. It was always broadcast over WSM radio. I have in my possession an old brochure that should stir up some nostalgic memories. It reads:

ALL YOUR OLD FRIENDS ARE BACK
ON THE 'GRAND OLE OPRY'...
LISTEN IN THIS SATURDAY NIGHT

HERE'S good news, folks! Carter's Champion Chicks

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are back on the air!

For your pleasure and enjoyment, Carter's Chickery is again sponsoring your favorite radio program- the famous, ever popular "Grand Ole Opry".

Every Saturday night-from now until the first of next May-Champion Chicks will bring you all your old radio friends, The "Solemn Old Judge!" Kirk and Sam McGee, The Fruit Jar Drinkers, Roy Acuff! And scores of other favorite "Barn dance" musicians and flusters.

Tune in on station WSM this Saturday night, and enjoy the "Grand Ole Opry" with the compliments of Carter's Champion Chicks.



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Most of us couldn't go to see the show; so the Opry came to us. I did a brochure on a piece of notebook paper in pencil with the following information:

FOSTERVILLE SCHOOL

-Show-7:30-Adm. .20-.30

TUES.-OCT.-28th

WSM

SAM & KIRK MCGEE

The: Boys: From: Tennessee

TEXAS DAISY

The Golden West Cowgirl

"ZEKE" CLEMENTS

The: Dixie: Yodeler

Songs-Fun-Music

The coming of the Opry stars to Fosterville School was a big thing. Roy Acuff and his Smokey Mountain Boys would come and entertain a house full of folks for a couple of hours. He was my grandmother's favorite country singer. Many of his songs were religious in nature. His father was a preacher. He is still remembered for "The Great Speckled Bird", "Wabash Cannon Ball" and "My Radio's Dialed To Heaven On High". The antics of Rachael, Brother Oswald, Pap and Odie were hilarious. It brought cheer and helped folks forget the hard times for a little while.

Also, there were Uncle Dave Macon and his son Dorris. Uncle Dave was from just outside Murfreesboro. His house used to have, in billboard-sized letters across the front, "Uncle Dave Macon". It is said that Uncle Dave was a teamster in his youth and somewhat of a rough character. But sitting upon the wagon box playing his music, he was soon recognized far and wide as a great banjo picker. He could also do tricks with his banjo. He learned he could make a good living at it, and, in time, he and Dorris became regular performers on the Grand 'Ole Opry. The city of Murfreesboro still sponsors "Uncle Dave Mason Days" each year. I went to high school with one of his grandsons. Most of us kids considered him a kind of celebrity. His father drove a Model "T" pickup truck and shod horses and mules for a living.

The Golden Age of Radio

The thirties, forties, and the first of the fifties are considered "The Golden Age of Radio". It was our link with the rest of the world with news, entertainment, and education. During the twenties and the thirties, there were only a few super stations, and Nashville's 50,000-watt WSM was one of them. After the war, the FCC allowed

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other stations to open up in smaller towns and cities. When we got our Zenith radio in 1939, we had to string the antenna wire out the window and over to a tree just to pick up a few stations on the dial, as well as some Short Wave stations. Although we were only about forty miles from Nashville (as the crow flies) the reception was sometimes not very good. But we enjoyed listening in spite of the static. It was our window to the world. My mother and grandmother enjoyed their soaps while ironing and doing other household chores. There was *Stella Dallas*, *Young Widow Brown*, and other daily serials. Coming home from school, I ate a snack (I was always hungry) and sat by the radio and listened to *The Adventures of the Lone Ranger*, *Dick Tracy*, *Superman*, *Flash Gordon*, and others. At night, there would be *Inner Sanctum*, *Fibber McGee and Mollie*, *The Shadow*, and other favorites. My parents allowed me to take the radio to my bed and turn it down real low and listen. But they quit doing that when I heard some programs that upset me. One was about a chicken heart that some scientists were experimenting with. It got soaked by some kind of chemical in a laboratory and started growing. They couldn't stop it. It grew out of the room and then out of the building, destroying it in the process. They called in the army, but they couldn't stop it. The sound effects were good. You could hear the *thump, thump, thump* of the heart growing louder and louder. It destroyed the city and it continued to spread. At the last, the only survivor of the world was up in an airplane looking down at the enormous chicken heart that had covered the entire earth, and the plane was running out of gas! After that, I couldn't sleep. I could still hear that *thump, thump, thump*. That was it! My radio listening was suddenly rationed.

My folks kept up with the news, weather reports, and the noon-day stock market reports. Edward R. Murrow was one of the newscasters we often listened to. One other favorite was Gabriel Heater. He was a different kind of journalist. He would go on the air bringing the war news, what was happening in politics and around the world. A lot of it was distressing, but he would always end his broadcast with: "But I've got good news tonight!" Then, he would close with a light-hearted and encouraging human-interest story. I wish that we had more journalists like that today.

TV - A Gloss of Novelty

Television came into our lives in the late forties. The screens were small and the pictures were in color--black and white. At first the only channel we could get was WSM-TV in Nashville. The TV sets were rather expensive for the time, but folks somehow were able to pay for them. A TV was set up in the former school building which was then used as a community center. Folks would go there and sit and watch TV until bedtime or sign-off. We sometimes went to the home of Uncle Dorris to watch TV until we got our own. It got to the place, though, that it became somewhat irritating that people would sit for hours with eyes glued to the TV screen. It was

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nick-named "The One-Eyed Monster". Conversation became a lost art. Kids neglected their homework. Neighbors and friends became almost strangers. Some preachers I knew fired away at going to the movies and watching TV, but soon had TV's of their own. Of course, they just watched the news! What a waste of breath! I was talking with a former neighbor of ours recently, and he said that the first TV he saw was at our house.

My grandmother, and all those of her generation, witnessed many changes - the invention of the airplane, the automobile, the electric light bulb, the telephone, radio, TV, etc. She thoroughly enjoyed listening to the radio and watching TV. Like most women, she enjoyed the week-day soaps. What was probably most surprising to me is that in the early days of TV, she enjoyed wrestling! She even had a favorite wrestler! It may have been Gorgeous George. But back in those days, wrestling was more of a sport and was not as fake as it seems to be now.

The Sunset Sisters

Besides fellowship at church, there were also social clubs for both young and old. The widows in Fosterville had such a club that met from house to house on a regular basis. They visited, ate pot-luck dinners, and did other things that interested them. At one time, they had more than twenty members in this small community. Teasing my grandmother, I used to call them "The Sunset Sisters".

CHAPTER XI

THE WAR OF THE WORLD

"And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be not troubled for such things must needs me, but the end shall not be yet." (Mk. 13:7)

While war was going on in Europe on one side of the globe and in Asia on the other side, the United States tried to follow the policy of isolationism. But it didn't work. On December 8, 1941, war was declared against Japan following the December 7 sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. A few days later, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. My mother was there and heard the news on the radio. She wrote the following in my scrapbook:

The U.S.A. declared war on Japan on this day, Monday, Dec. 8, 1941. The Senate voted 82-0 for war and the House voted 388-1. The one vote against was a woman, Miss J. Rankin, who also voted no in the first World War. Japan attacked the Hawaiian Island and adjoining islands on Sun. Morning, Dec. 7, 1941, killing 3,000 Americans and destroying one or two battle ships. The Senate and House voted for war about 12 o'clock, and the President o.k.'d the bill at about 3 o'clock Monday afternoon, Dec. 8, 1941.

A few days later, she added the following:

Germany and Italy declared war on the U.S.A. this morning, Dec. 11, 1941, just 23 years and one month since the signing of the peace from the last world war. This day at about 12 o'clock, the Senate voted for war 90-0, and the House (393-0) was 100% in favor of war. Miss Janette Rankin voted in favor of war today, having voted against it on Dec. 8 when the U.S.A. went to war with Japan.

She continued:

"Remember Pearl Harbor" has become a slogan since that fatal morning on Sun, 7th of December, when Pearl Harbor was bombed by the ruthless Japs, and as President Roosevelt said in his broadcast of Jan. 6, 1942: "We can take it and we will give it back with compound interest!" The President asked congress to appropriate \$56 billion to fight this man's war.

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Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, from the state of Tennessee, was there at the beginning. The following newspaper article reported Mr. Hull's last meeting with the Japanese Ambassadors under the heading:

"That's Tellin' 'Em, Mr. Hull"

Washington, Jan. 3-And now the story of Secretary of State Cordell Hull's last conference with Japanese Ambassador Admiral Kirchisaburo Normura and "Peace Envoy" Saburu Kurusu can be told.

It was on Pearl Harbor Day, early in the morning, that the Jap diplomats and the picturesque Tennessean were sitting in the Secretary's office at the State Department, talking about methods of avoiding war in the Pacific.

In the midst of the conversations, a messenger entered through the side door bearing a note. "Pearl Harbor has been bombed," the note read. It was initialed "F. D. R."

Hull glanced at it, at first not grasping the meaning. He looked a second time and this time began to understand and believe.

His Tennessee temper flared white-hot. He jumped to his feet, and turned to the two Japs:

"You yellow-bellied _____! Get out of here!"

The Japs may not have understood all the hill-billy cusswords that rained upon their heads, but, according to the story, they understood enough to scamper from the room as quickly as they could.

Although there was some dissension, our nation was never more united than when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Most people in those days were not ashamed to display love of country and show patriotism. This was taught to the children. At school every morning, led by the teachers, the Pledge of Allegiance was cited and someone led a prayer. In November of 1941, just before Pearl Harbor, the school at Fosterville presented a Patriotic Program consisting of Flag Drill, songs and playlet. Fifty years later, that would not have been allowed. All during the war, those on the home front did all they could to let our troops know that they supported them and appreciated what they were doing and the sacrifices they were making.

The churches were supportive of our troops through their prayers, care packages, and cards and letters written by the members. There was a popular businessman and preacher at that time who was rather colorful in his presentations. His name was Andy Largin. As the story goes, he was converted while in prison. One Sunday, at the New Herman church of Christ near Shelbyville, he preached a powerful sermon on the subject of forgiveness. He pointed out that Jesus taught that we must forgive even our enemies. He paused for the effect and then asked: "If Adolf Hilter came through that door today, what would you do?" He paused again. All was quiet. You could hear a pin drop. Then, from the back of the auditorium, came an old

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man's voice, "Shoot him!"

There was a concerted effort in Hollywood, the media, and other entertainers to rally the American people to the challenge. It was urgent; our very survival depended upon it. Roy Acuff and the Smoky Mountain Boys rose to the challenge. One of Roy's songs was:

"Cowards Over Pearl Harbor"

Pearl Harbor was calm one bright Sabbath morning
But the trouble and strife was lying in wait'
Then out of the sky came hawks of destruction
Piloted by disciples of hate.

When bombs filled the air with all of their fury,
A story of shame was being unfurl'd;
A coward's desire fell down on Pearl Harbor,
Spreading the war all over the world.

Oh, someday they'll pay for all their evil,
When all of their schemes are proven in vain;
We'll never forget that day in Pearl Harbor,
And they'll regret it time and again.

Oh what will they say to all of their children,
And how can they look themselves in the face;
Oh what will they do that great judgment morning,
They must go down with their moral disgrace.

Japanese Invade Philippines

After Pearl Harbor, in January, 1942, the Japanese invaded the Philippines, an American possession since the war with Spain near the turn of the century. Manila, the capital, fell, and the defenders withdrew to the Bataan Peninsula. General Douglas MacArthur moved his headquarters off-shore to the rocky, fortified island of Corregidor, called the "Gibraltar of the Pacific". Unable to keep up the fight because of a lack of reinforcements, the army on Bataan surrendered. This was the beginning of the death march to a prison camp about 65 miles away. Some 15,000 prisoners died during the march of starvation, thirst, and the abuse of the Japanese soldiers. Those who stumbled and fell or stopped to get a drink of water were whipped, beaten, or shot on the spot. There was no mercy. Brig. Gen. Austin Shoffner of Shelbyville was a survivor of the death march and later led a successful escape from

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prison, aided by a fierce tribe of head-hunters.⁴⁰ He said that the Japs made the mistake of thinking that the people of the Philippines hated Americans. They didn't. They loved Americans. They lined up along the route and gave them fruit and other food to eat, for which many of them were severely punished. He stated that, compared to 1% of prisoner deaths during the war in Europe, Japan prison deaths were as high as 45%.

The bombardment of Corregidor resulted in its surrender in May, but MacArthur, under strict orders from President Roosevelt, had already left. He left with the now-famous promise "I shall return." This promise he kept for, just a little over three years later, he was able to announce the liberation of the Philippines. The late Adrian Limbawan, a friend and colleague of mine, was an eye-witness to these historically important events. In fact, he was a participant. He was only seven years of age and in the first grade when the Japanese occupation of the Philippines began. He was born in 1934 in the town of Bagabag, Nueva Vizcaya, in Luzon, the northern part of the main island. His father was a rice farmer. The people of the village fled to the mountains only to return home after about six months. He had not finished the first grade when they left, but when they returned, he went right on into the second grade, although he had not learned many of the basics. He remembered the hardships and suffering the people endured at the hands of the Japanese soldiers. He told of the raping of women in the fields of cane and the torture and killing of many of the men. He said that one of the favorite methods of torture was to have the victims drink as much water as they could possibly hold and then they would be laid on their backs on the ground and their tormentors would stand on their bellies. He said that sometimes they would take a bayonet and stick them. When he saw this being done as a little boy, he became frightened and ran away. He told of the waging of Guerilla warfare from the mountains where they were hiding. This continued until the end of the war in 1945. These Guerillas were supported with food and other provisions by the sympathizers who would have surely been tortured and executed if discovered. He, as a small boy, had a big part in this resistance. He carried bags of food from his village to the Guerillas. We can only admire the great courage of one so young. In our interviews, he simply shrugged it off and said that this was just the part he played in the war effort.

The fighting was fierce. The people moved out of the villages for safety. They built huts in the rice fields to live in. Adrian told of the low-flying American planes coming in to bomb the Japanese positions. The Americans attacked from one direction and the Guerillas from another. The Japanese were filled with terror. They intended to massacre the people before leaving, but were prevented from doing so due to the rapid advance of the Americans. Yamashita, a Japanese General, was captured. As he was brought into the village, he refused to sit down in the open vehicle but stood up at attention. As the convoy passed, the people gathered along the road and demonstrated their hatred of the Japanese occupiers by throwing sticks and

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stones at him. He was soon tried and hanged for his war crimes.

Here Come the Yanks!

Winston Churchill was greatly relieved when the United States entered the war. Things were not going well for the British. He later admitted that when he went to bed that night, he knew that they would be victorious. One of the first things they did was to take the fight to the enemy with day and night bombing raids. The U.S. Eighth Air Force set up bases in England in mid-1942. The British had given up daylight bombing because they were losing too many planes, but the United States took it up with its squadrons of powerful, high-flying, four-engine B-24's and B-27's. Later, they modified the P-51 Mustang so that they could escort the bombers and give protection.

Billy Lynch, from Fosterville, was there. He was one of those flying warriors. He and his wife, Angie (Brothers) still live on a little farm within the shadow of Soapstone Hill. As a boy, climbing up Soapstone Hill, he probably thought that would be as high as he would ever get (in this life, anyway), but he was wrong. Not many years later, he found himself flying in cramped quarters in the nose of a B-24, freezing to death at high altitude, as a Navigator with 8 or 10 other crew members. He said that they went on bombing raids 'round the clock, Americans in the day and the British at night.

"Were you ever scared?" I asked him. "Every time!" he was quick to reply.

"Where was your station on the plane?" "In the nose. I was the Navigator."

"Well, I guess you had a good view." "Yep, sure did."

He talked about seeing the danger of the flack they had to fly through, and seeing planes shot down.

"As a Navigator, did you ever get lost?" I asked.

With a twinkle in his eye, he replied: "If I did, I would never admit it!"

I asked if he had ever been shot down, and he said that he hadn't, but that his brother, Hoover Lynch, a pilot of a B-17, was shot down and had to bail out. Luckily, he was uninjured and returned home safely.

Billy could not remember exactly, but he thinks he flew 30 or 35 missions. He told me that, on D-Day, he flew two missions.

Jack Woodruff, from our community, was also there. He missed D-Day, but found himself in the middle of the Battle of the Bulge. He arrived at the front from the ship on a cattle train. It was bitterly cold, and Jack woke up with frozen feet. Luckily, the medics treated him in time, and he was soon well. When the battle began, it was very cold and they fought in deep snow. He told of seeing a house that had been damaged, but part of it was still intact. There was a sign that read, "OFF LIMITS", but he was tired and desperate for a place where he could rest in relative safety. He went inside, spread his blankets, and was soon fast asleep. Suddenly, he

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was awakened by a loud explosion. A shell had hit the house and there was a piece of timber or some other material sticking out of his jaw. He lost no time in getting out of there. He said that this taught him one important lesson: *"Pay attention to signs! They are there for a purpose."*

I asked him if he received a purple heart for being wounded. His answer was that he never told anyone then how he got his wound, because they would have known that he was where he should not have been. He said that he never killed anybody and never tried to.

"Were you ever shot at?" I asked.

"Many times," he said with emphasis and then quoted Teddy Roosevelt: *"There is nothing more exhilarating than to be shot at and missed!"*

Sam Black Bingham was another brave soldier who was there. He was with the 99th Infantry Division. Dick Poplin, a Shelbyville journalist who interviewed Sam Black, wrote that he said that he was not with General Patton when he crossed the Rhine, but he believed that his unit was ahead of him. However, he was with Patton at the crossing of the Danube where mud was up to the body of the trucks and Patton was directing traffic.⁴¹

Sam was in the thick of the battle in Europe many times. He once told me of seeing comrades being mowed down from machine gun fire from enemy pill boxes. On one occasion, he and some of his men went into an abandoned barn to get some rest. It was a dark night, and, soon after they had fallen asleep, they were briefly aroused by the sound of others coming into another part of the barn. Assuming that it was some more of their own men, they soon drifted back to sleep. Early the next morning when they awoke, they discovered that their sleeping companions in the next stall were not Americans but *Germans!* All of them were speechless with surprise, Germans and Americans alike. They just sort of waved at each other, and the Germans departed.

Buck Fulton was in the Navy and served in the Pacific. He once described to me the fighting off of Japanese airplanes attacking his ship. He said that, with bullets whizzing around everywhere and bombs exploding, it grew so hot that paint was peeling off the steel plates of the vessel!

Mitchell Jones, a neighboring farmer, was better than thirty years old when he joined the Marines. He was stationed in California, serving as an MP and preparing to be shipped overseas when the war ended. At the age of thirty, he would have been considered too old for the military. Faye, one of his daughters, replied to my question: *"He wanted to go."*

My future father-in-law, **James Deaton**, was in the Army Air Corps and served in India. He was a mechanic and among those who kept the planes flying of The Hump. He was from Indiana, but he and his family lived for a while in the Soapstone area where he and his friends loved to hunt.

These are some who made it home. However, many did not. Of those who did,

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many were scarred for life, both mentally and physically. Some I knew were shell-shocked and suffered from nightmares for many years afterward. I knew a veteran who would wake up at night screaming, thinking that he was about to fall into the hands of the enemy. Some suffered from drug addiction after having been wounded. But, they didn't think of themselves as being heroes. They were just ordinary American men and women doing their job, and what a job they did for their country! We owe them so much for their sacrifices. It is hard to imagine what the world today would be like if the Allied Forces had not been successful in bringing about victory. It is for certain that we would not be enjoying the freedoms that we now have such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of choice, freedom of movement, and we could go on and on. Thank God for the "Greatest Generation"!

On the island of Iwo Jima, where there were 26,000 American casualties within a month of fighting, there is a cemetery with these words displayed at the entrance:

*When you go home
Tell them for us and say
For your tomorrow
We gave our today*

At an early age, I learned that freedom is not free.

The Bomb

Pearl Harbor marked the beginning of the War of the World for the United States. The end of the war was brought about by "The Bomb". I remember both.

The whole world seemed to stand still. The news was digested with awe and amazement. The unbelievable had happened. In the days that followed, there developed a weird feeling mixed with relief that the war was coming to an end on one hand and fear and apprehension on the other. What kind of monstrous, destructive power had been unleashed? Would it mean that warfare had become so horrible that there would be no more wars? Or would it mean just the opposite: that wars would become so destructive that the human race would annihilate itself? No question about it, though: We knew the world would never be the same.

On August 6, 1945, a lone B-29 bomber flew over Hiroshima and dropped a single bomb resulting in an explosion heard around the world. Suddenly, much of the city lay in ruins. Three days later, on August 9, 1945, Nagasaki was the target. A total of at least 11,000 were injured and 106,000 killed or missing. This is what it took to get the attention of the military leadership of Japan. On the 14th day of August, 1945, came the surrender. The War of the World came to a close.

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"The Bomb" was built in Tennessee. It was developed in a new city which was built for that purpose, Oak Ridge. We all knew about Oak Ridge. We knew that something important was being developed there, but no one would venture to guess as to what it was. It was pretty much a closed city. It was rumored that each employee was given a task and worked in virtual isolation. Each one knew his job well, but was never told exactly the purpose of it or how it related to the finished product. It was a well-kept secret.

J. B. Chrisman of our community lived and worked there for a while. He was the son of our closest neighbor, Sam. His wife, Bercie Bell, was the daughter of another neighbor, Albert Alderson. Their son, Samuel Albert, was about my age. We went through grammar school and high school together. J. B. and Bercie Bell would come home for visits and talk about the secrecy surrounding the city of Oak Ridge. For years, it remained a mystery.

The moral justification for using such a destructive force against the Japanese Empire has long been debated. President Harry S. Truman has been criticized and, in some instances, demonized for authorizing the dropping of those two bombs. But the truth of the matter is that Mr. Truman had no choice. It was a war that was costing the United States \$250 million a day, or \$175,000 a minute. The decision to use the bomb had been made several months before at the Potsdam summit meeting of the Big Three: Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin. They believed that there was no other way to bring about the capitulation of the fanatical military leadership of Japan and that it would actually save hundreds of thousands of lives on both sides. History has proved them correct.

Germany had been defeated, and the allies stood at the doorstep of Japan's mainland. Every indication was that the Japanese were determined to fight 'til death. The youth had been thoroughly brainwashed by the military regime that had taken control of the government during the past two decades. They were taught that they were a superior race and that their gods had assured their favorable destiny. They were to build a great Empire and rule the Far East. Furthermore, there would be, eventually, war with the United States. They drilled into the minds of these young people that the greatest honor was to die in combat for the "Rising Sun". Surrender was a dishonor and a sign of cowardice. The allies also knew that civilians would be pressed into the fight, demanding of them the same sacrifice.

The United States and its allies were assembling a force of 770,000 for the first wave of attack alone. By comparison, the Normandy invasion had required only 175,000. The second wave of attack that would target Tokyo involved one million. They were preparing for hundreds of thousands of casualties, even in the first few days of fighting. I personally knew of men from our community who were waiting to be shipped to the Pacific when the war ended.

Mr. Truman had a sign on his desk: "THE BUCK STOPS HERE." The awful burden he inherited, falling upon his shoulders. He accepted the responsibility, and I

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believe that he made the right decision.

Just think: There are millions alive today who would have never been born if not for "The Bomb". They would have never been born because their fathers would have perished by the hundreds of thousands in the invasion of Japan. Not only would this be true of Americans, but of the Japanese, as well. I believe that God's providence provided that powerful weapon to save civilization, not to destroy it.

CHAPTER XII

"KILROY WAS HERE"

"I hope there is nothing that causes you to join any of the military services." -Advice from a Kilroy, Pvt. Boon E. Hubbard, a soldier



Remember Kilroy? That famous but ever-elusive Kilroy? How could anyone forget him! When the war games came to Middle Tennessee, graffiti was found everywhere - bridges, barns, outhouses, you name it - announcing that "Kilroy was here". Seemingly, he was everywhere, but I never saw him in person nor have I never met anyone who claimed to have seen him. He wasn't a phantom, however. The name was just an appellation for our military like "GI Joe". Yes, Kilroy was here, and he left his mark!

From early history, Tennessee has been known as the "Volunteer State". This began with Andrew Jackson and the War of 1812, and this great state has always lived up to its reputation. When I was a small boy, I would often see a banner with a red border in windows of homes with one or more blue stars in the center. I learned that these stars represented those of the household who served in WWI. Sometimes the stars were gold. This represented those of the household who died or were killed in service. During World War II, the little

community where I grew up once again did more than its share in the war effort. Several served in the military. Some made the ultimate sacrifice. Those left behind on the home front did what they could to support the brave young men and women overseas. They were always remembered in our prayers, and we sent letters and relief packages. They "hoed to the end of the row."

For the second time in history, Middle Tennessee experienced a taste of war. The first was the Civil War. The second was the maneuvers that started in June, 1941.

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The "war zone" covered a 600 square-mile area which included Murfreesboro, Lebanon, Shelbyville, Tullahoma, and Manchester. For three summers in the early forties, we witnessed what it must be like fighting at the front. It seemed to happen suddenly. All of a sudden, our peaceful little community was invaded by thousands of troops stationed at Camp Forrest in Tullahoma by opposing armies, the "Reds" and the "Blues" Estimates ran anywhere from 77,000 to 83,000. By comparison, General Hood had only 44,000 at the Battle of Nashville.⁴² It was one lazy summer morning in June, 1941. I had just had my ninth birthday. School was out for summer. Dad was away at work, my mother and grandmother were busy in the house, and I was entertaining myself, riding my bicycle up and down the gravel road in front of our house. My dog, Highway, was by my side. To the south of our home was the Lynch place that sloped down to a narrow valley. Crossing another line fence was Bailey's Creek that flowed into Dry Creek, and then there was the western extension of Soapstone which was heavily wooded and, with thick underbrush, it was hard for a cow or a horse to get through, much less a man. I happened to look in that direction when I saw a human form emerge from the woods and undergrowth. He was armed. At first, I thought he must be a hunter, but then I saw another and another come into view. There were dozens and then hundreds. We were being invaded! I wanted to run, but there was no place to go. So, Highway and I just stood there in the middle of the road, gaping as they advanced. Across the creek, they came, on across the line fence, riding it to the ground. Onward they came, up to the road where we stood. What struck me was the silence. There were no airplanes flying around, no cannons firing, no vehicles roaring, no talking. They just silently moved up to the road where we were and crossed the fence over to our farm. It was not a lark they were on. They all had the look of meaning business. On up our hill they went, and then, they stopped to rest and wait for further orders. This was the beginning of the army maneuvers in Middle Tennessee.

Camp Forrest was one of the army's largest training bases from 1941 to 1946. It was a boon to the local economy, as we were coming to the end of the Great Depression when it was built. Several men of the community, including my dad, got jobs building the camp and commuted together to work every day. It was named after a Confederate General of the cavalry, Nathan Bedford Forrest, who was born at nearby Chapel Hill. It was originally Camp Peay, named after a 1920's Tennessee Governor, Austin Peay. It was located east of Tullahoma and built as a National Guard camp in 1926. Camp Peay covered 1,040 acres, but Camp Forrest covered 85,000 acres. The camp was a training area for infantry, artillery, engineering, and signal corps. It also served as a hospital center and temporary encampment area for troops during maneuvers. Incoming troops were provided with amenities such as service clubs, guest houses, a library, post exchanges, a post office, a hospital, religious services, theaters, showers, Red Cross, and Army Emergency Relief facilities. Recreation facilities included swimming, archery, tennis, a sports arena,

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and a 9-hole golf course.

William Northern Field, an air training base, was also built nearby. It was used as a training site for crews of multi-engine, B-24 bombers of the Army Air Force.

Camp Forrest also became a prisoner-of-war camp, housing Italian and German POW's. Prisoners were processed as laborers at Camp Forrest, in the hospitals, and in the local community on farms.

The small Tennessee town of Tullahoma was greatly affected by the installation of Camp Forrest. Because of maneuvers and operations, civilians became accustomed to blocked roads, traffic jams, crowded stores, the absence of mail delivery, and driving at night without lights. Soldiers camped out on lawns and in fields. Many crops and fences were destroyed. The population of Tullahoma was 4,500 in 1940, but, by the end of the war, it had grown to 75,000. Many military people who moved in for construction and operation of the camp remained after the war.

In 1946, Camp Forrest and Northern Field were declared surplus property. Buildings were sold at auction, torn down and carted away. Water and sewage systems and electrical systems were sold as salvage. All that remained were roads, brick chimneys, and concrete foundations. I remember driving through there when it looked like a ghost town. But, later, the area was revived and became the Arnold Engineering Development Center. Once again, well-paying jobs were made available to the citizens of a wide area, bringing economic prosperity to the once-depressed region.

Units Stationed at Camp Forrest

193rd Glider Infantry Regiment
194th Glider Infantry Regiment
513th Parachute Infantry Regiment
17th Airborne Division Artillery
680th Glider Field Artillery Battalion
83681st Glider Field Artillery Battalion
466th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion
155th Airborne Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion
139th Airborne Engineer Battalion
517th Airborne Signal Company
H H C, 17th Airborne Division
717th Airborne Ordnance Company
411th Airborne Quartermaster Company
17th Airborne MP Platoon
17th Parachute Maintenance Company
224th Airborne Medical Company
Army Service Forces baker and cook school

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Women's Air Corp detachments
48th Medical Depot Company
415th Artillery Group
1457th Service Command Unit of Army Service Forces
71st Army Air Force Base Unit of the 104th Weather Group
737th AAF Base Unit of the 107th Army Airways
Communications System Squadron
AT Battery, 1st Battalion, 191st Field Artillery
HQ&HQ Company, 183rd Tank Battalion
Service Battery, 2nd Battalion, 181st Field Artillery Btry
Company A, 183rd Tank Battalion
Company B, 183rd Tank Battalion
Company C, 183rd Tank Battalion
HQ Battery, 2nd Bn., 191st Field Artillery
Battery H, 2nd Bn., 191st Field Artillery
HQ Battery, 3rd Bn., 191st Field Artillery
HQ 765th Tank Battalion
HQ, HQ Company 765th Tank Battalion
Company A, 765th Tank Battalion
Company B, 765th Tank Battalion
Company C, 765th Tank Battalion
Recon Co., 775th Tank Battalion
HQ Btry, 959th Field Artillery Battalion
Service Btry, 959th Field Artillery Battalion
Battery A, 959th Field Artillery Battalion
Battery B, 959th Field Artillery Battalion
Battery C, 959th Field Artillery Battalion
107th Cavalry. Regiment., Horse Mech. (Ohio)
33rd Inf. Div. (III National Guard)

The United States had entered the war in December 1941. In June of 1942, Governor Prentice Cooper announced that nine mid-state counties were to be used in helping train the 2nd Army. Headquarters for the 1942 maneuvers was at Cumberland University in Lebanon. More than 800,000 troops passed through Middle Tennessee before deploying overseas. But it was not without a cost of life. 268 soldiers lost their lives, mostly in accidents. One of the worst tragedies was when a 28-ton tank slipped off a pontoon bridge on the Cumberland River and the crew drowned.

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General Patton's Pants

Major General George S. Patton was destined to become a legend in his own lifetime. The story is told of him falling out of his Jeep during military training exercises just outside of Shelbyville. He was observing his Second Armored Division crossing the Duck River. He jumped into his Jeep, attempting to go around a column of tanks and armored vehicles on the other side. The Jeep tipped over in the mud, and he came up out of the water wet and with torn pants. Freeman Fly happened to be there, and he saved the day, being the son of the owner of Fly manufacturing, J. O. Fly. His company had a government contract to manufacture army uniforms. He told the General that he had a shirt to match his uniform, but he did not have trousers to fit him. However, if he could wait a few minutes, he would have a pair made.⁴³

Iris Bomar Whitney, in her book, *On Thompson Creek*, also tells the story of Patton's mishap at Duck River, but goes on to give another glimpse of his human side. He stopped by a small country store. It was a hot day, and Lucille Riddle, an owner of the store with her husband, invited him to have a cold drink, but he declined. Instead, he sat on a bench for a few minutes, visiting with some of the men who habitually gathered there.⁴⁴

We didn't know it then, but this part of the country was chosen for training because it closely resembled the rugged country of Western Europe where the invasion was planned. Maj. Gen. George S. Patton, the famous "Hell on Wheels", brought his Second Armored Division to Middle Tennessee. He led his tanks and other armored vehicles up our road and then almost directly in front of our house. They then went south across Mr. Lynch's fence, on across his property, spreading out and breaking down another line fence, across Bailey's Creek, and on up the hill, through the woods and thickets, breaking down huge trees as they went. They tore up the ground with deep ruts. The route they took could be easily traced for years after.

General Patton always wanted to be on the spot in the thick of the battle, whether real or simulated. At this particular time, General Bruce Magreuder, commander of the First Armored Division, was with Patton. "Where is your command post, General?" he asked Patton who was seated on the rear bumper of a reporter's car. He grinned and replied, "Right here on the bumper of this car."⁴⁵

General Patton believed that a lead should be in the lead. On one occasion, he found armored vehicles going every which way in confusion. He located the officer in command sitting under a tree. In no uncertain terms, he instructed the officer to "get up and get out there and straighten out that mess". In a later meeting with his officers, he noted that some were not in the lead tanks. "You can't move a string of wet spaghetti by pushing it from the end," he declared.⁴⁶ He also followed the practice of telling his people what to do but never how to do it. He said that the ingenuity that they come up with is often amazing. This, no doubt, contributed to his success as a leader.

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General Patton survived the war, but died in an automobile accident in Germany shortly thereafter. Ernest Spence of Midland said that he was in Heidleburg, Germany in December, 1945 and saw Patton's casket carried away on a half-track in a funeral procession.

One day, a huge tank came rumbling up our driveway, stopping at the gate. One of the crew jumped down and held the gate open while the tank passed through. Closing the gate, the tank continued on over our hill. It was gone nearly all day. Late that afternoon, as it returned, instead of being nice enough to open and close the gate as they did that morning, they just went right on through two of our fences onto the road. Later, we found that the fence on the backside of the place had been broken down, also. We had a time keeping our cattle from straying.

My father had a large field rented across the road on the side of Soapstone Hill planted in corn. It was about knee high, and he, with a team of mares, was plowing. I was at home sitting on the porch in the swing, watching him in the distance going back and forth, back and forth across the field. And then I saw a convoy of Jeeps and trucks come up the valley from the west, parallel to Bailey's Creek toward the field. Their destination, I surmised, was the top of Soapstone which rose about 1,310 feet. But, to do so, they had to cross my dad's corn field and, without hesitation, across it they went. My dad just stopped working and stood there and watched. They tore up his field of corn badly, trying to cross the line fence, where it was very steep. They never made it. They had to turn around and go back the way they came. My dad must have been pretty disgusted, but, if he was, he never let it show.

Next to us, to the west, was the Chrisman farm. One day, a large convoy moved in and set up camp under some trees behind Mr. Chrisman's barn. We had a large stock pool (12' x 20') fed by a spring from the side of our hill. One of the soldiers came onto our property looking for water. When he saw the pool, he asked my father if he could shave there, and he was given permission. But my dad didn't realize what he was getting himself into. The next thing he knew, soldiers were lined up all around the pool shaving, and a long line of them were coming. When they finished shaving, foam was standing about three inches high on top of the water. Even after removing the foam, the cattle refused to drink. We had to empty the pool, clean it out, and refill it with fresh water before they would use it again. What a job!

My mother and grandmother made pies and sold them to the soldiers. Sometimes, soldiers ate at our table. We never knew who was coming to dinner, or breakfast, for that matter. They seemed to appreciate everything that was done for them. We knew how homesick they must have been and how concerned they must have been about their futures. They were mostly in their late teens or early twenties, but mature far beyond their years. In her diary, my mother wrote:

June 2, 1941: Today marked the beginning of the maneuverings although we have not seen much of it with the exception of cars and trucks passing.

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June 3, 1941: Today was about the same as yesterday.

June 4, 1941: This morning when I got up, there was an army car parked on top of Soapstone Hill. Another has gone to join the car already on the hill. Lots of soldiers came through our yard and about 200 camped back of our house in Mr. Chrisman's lot. They came to our well of water and our pool to wash up. We sold them milk.

June 5, 1941: About 323 soldiers passed our house marching today. Lots of soldiers came to our house for milk and canned fruit.

June 6, 1941: Today has been a busy day for our soldier boys. Four cars and trucks came right down from the top of our hill. Cars went through daddy's corn field and on up Soapstone Hill. A number of boys were in our yard at lunch time and they bought milk, coffee, tea, and pie from us. One boy ate breakfast with us. They set up a machine gun just below our west window.

June 7-14, 1941: The boys have been real quiet for a few days. We have seen very little of them.

June 15, 1941: Cars and trucks passed our house all night on the 15th. Someone said 450 cars and trucks passed, and about 1,600 walking. Mr. Harris' store stayed open all night and served the boys.

June 16, 1941: Soldier boys have been all around our house today. Three stayed on our hill by the little spring all day. Mama sent them lunch which included fried chicken. They enjoyed it a lot.

June 17th, 1941: Mama baked the soldier boys 12 pies and a cake today.

Milton Wyatt Powell, Franklin Smith, Don Powell, Billie Fulton, and other friends and playmates and I were there in the midst of it all. We roamed the hills and became acquainted with a number of soldiers, most of them far from home and homesick. I took along my scrapbook and asked some of them to give me their names and addresses and to write something. Here is what five of them wrote:

Dear Roy Jr.

I haven't known you very long, but long enough to know I like you very much. I hope you have a great future and wish you well.

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*Virgil H. Rhodes
Co. E, 153 Inf.,
Camp Robinson,
Little Rock, Ark.*

Dear Roy Jr.,

Roy, I am so proud I met you, and I hope you remember how I look now, and won't join the army when you get old enough. Cause it doesn't agree with your stomach. Well I am not supposed to write a letter, but I am really proud I met you and I hope I will get to see you again someday.

*A Soldier
Pvt. Vernon R. Holben
Co. E, 153 Inf.
Camp Robinson*

Dear Roy Jr.,

Proud I met you. Think you are nice boy. I am from Arkansas but I like Tennessee just fine. I don't like the army much but I guess it is o.k. Please write to me when we go home. Thanks for the kindness. Just a soldier.

*Pvt. James W. Felkins
Co. E, 153 Inf.
Camp Robinson
Little Rock, Ark.*

Dear Roy Jr.,

Glad to have met you. Have had a nice time with you. Think you and your folks are nice.

*Pvt. Chester A. Williams
Co. E, 153 Inf.,
Camp Robinson,
Little Rock, Ark.*

Dear Roy Jr.,

May you have a peaceful happy life. I hope there is nothing that causes

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you to join any of the military services. May you have success in life.

*Pvt. Boone E. Hubbard
Co. E, 153 Inf.,
Camp Robinson,
Little Rock, Ark.*

Private Harry Cooney, Company C, 106th Infantry, 27th Division, Fort McClellan, Ala., was an artist and sketched my picture which I still have. These young men were from the South, but many others were from northern cities and had never been south before. Some had never been on a farm nor did they know much about farm animals. A young northern soldier was talking with a cousin of mine, Juanita Smith. When milking time came, he went with her and the family to the barn to milk. The young soldier said something like, "Do you mean to tell me that's where milk comes from? If it is, I'll never drink another drop!"

To a boy of ten or twelve, every day brought an adventure. Our favorite game besides "Cowboy and Indian" was "Army". We ran around in and out of the barn and other farm buildings brandishing stick rifles and pistols, shooting at Germans or "Japs". Now, we could see first-hand how the big boys played the game. We could see and even

inspect the equipment they used. I was invited to climb up and look into a tank and talk to the crew about how it operated. That was a big thing to a small boy! I used to sit on the porch in the swing and watch the convoys go by. One convoy, I remember, lasted a day and a night, one vehicle after another. That was hard on the roads. In fact, all the roads were in mighty bad condition after the "army games" were over. Usually, it is very hot in the summertime in Tennessee and often very dry. It was hot and dry in the early 40's, and the dust was thick when the convoys went by. My folks did everything they could to keep the dust out of the house but finally had to give up.



Sketch of Roy, Jr. by Pvt. Harry Cooney

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Dust gathered thick on automobiles and machinery left outside. But it didn't bother us boys much until at night when we were forced to take baths before going to bed.

After visiting some of the camps and meeting some of the soldiers, my buddies and I saw an opportunity to supply a need and go into business, though it was temporary. These young men were not much older than we were, and they were hungry for snacks and reading material. I had dozens of comic books at home that I had collected over the years. I went and got them and sold them like hot cakes. We went to the country store and bought boxes of Hershey Bars, Almond Joys, Snickers, and whatever was available, and sold them for 100% markup. Yes, I was a budding entrepreneur! My folks joked that I would someday become a millionaire!

Early one morning, I was awakened by the rat-tat-tat of a machine gun just outside my window. They were firing at a passing convoy. I was in my glory! I had to go and see how that thing worked!

On another occasion, I saw a Jeep and two men on top of Soapstone Hill which was located across the valley in front of our house. I had climbed Soapstone Hill a number of times and thought I knew my way around. It was steep and rough in places, and as one neared the top, he would almost have to crawl, pulling himself along by grasping saplings and small bushes. It was hard work.

How did that Jeep get up there? I was curious. As soon as I could, I went to the hill to find out. I had a good visit with the two soldiers who were on reconnaissance. I was usually shy around adults in the community, but I had no trouble talking with young soldiers, most of whom were not much older than I. I told these two soldiers of a better way down the hill. I knew of an old wagon road that came up the north side of the hill and into some woods on the west side about three quarters of the way up. They immediately made me their official guide. I was given the front seat next to the driver, and away we went--straight down! It was scary. We went down the south side and on around to the woods on the west side, but, alas, I couldn't locate the old wagon road! I was embarrassed, but it didn't seem to bother my newly found friends. We drove on around the side of the hill horizontally to the north side. It was so steep, I was afraid that we would surely tip over. I was holding on for dear life! Then, we turned almost straight down, it seemed, through a gate and some deep gullies. That's when I decided I had enough adventure for one day! I followed the jeep and its two brave occupants on down the hill by foot. It created within me a respect for Wyllis Jeeps!

Along the highway to Murfreesboro, I saw several splotches of white and found out it was caused by airplanes "bombing" convoys with sacks of flour! Sometime after that, a friend and I were walking along the gravel road from the village store toward my home. We passed a large encampment of military on the Lynch property. At that instant, we heard a plane coming in low. I just knew that they were going to drop some flour-sack bombs. I could just see myself covered with that white stuff, looking like Casper the Ghost. We hit the deck. Or the roadside ditch! No bombs fell,

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however. The plane was just coming in for a landing in the Lynch hay field. It was a small plane, a two seat Piper Cub. That was the first airplane that I had ever seen up close.

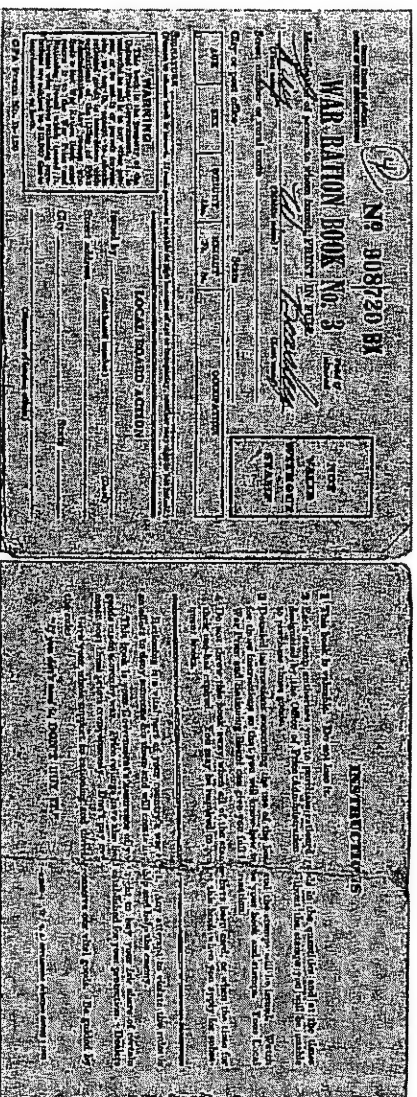
Mr. W. H. Harris owned some land behind his house and store along the asphalt-paved road that led into Fosterville. One day, a tank came rumbling down the road. When it reached Mr. Harris' property, the driver left the road and straddled the fence, leveling it for several hundred feet. Everyone realized that this training was necessary in winning the war, and the majority were willing to make sacrifices, but some of the destruction of property was willful and senseless. The maneuvers caused millions of dollars of damage to farms and municipalities, but I never heard much complaint. The only complaint I heard was about the seeming wastefulness of our troops. They would bury, along with the garbage, many sacks of sugar, flour, coffee, and other items civilians found hard to get. As the troops moved on, we boys scavenged the abandoned camp sites and found all sorts of things left behind such as pup tents, money, helmets, packs, knives, ammunition, and even rifles! These were considered treasures indeed! I found an army cap, which I wore to school, and earned the nickname "Sarge". My cousin, Don Powell, still calls me by that name, even after all these years!

At the end of the war games in 1944, my mother made this notation in my scrapbook:

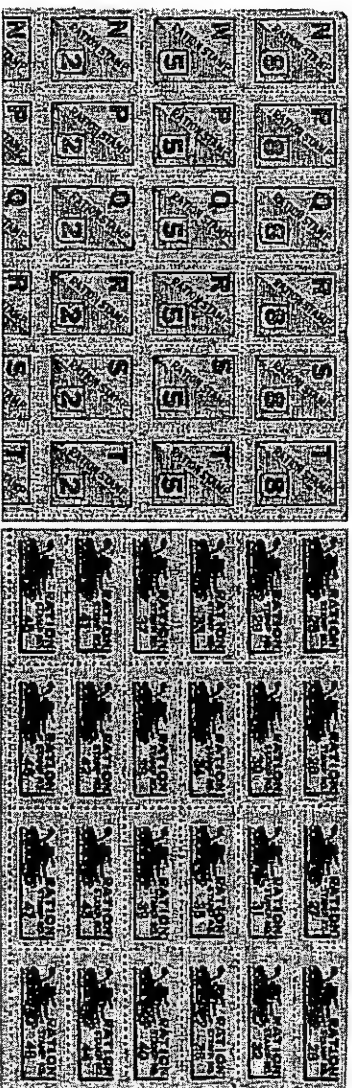
The government paid damages on the crops and fences done by the soldiers during the maneuvers. Daddy received damages on his corn crop and Mommy on her fence.



*Fosterville train depot
used as military headquarters*



Front and back of a WWII ration book



WWII ration stamps

CHAPTER XIII

SCHOOL DAZE

*"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning;
and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels." (Proverbs 1:5)*

School "Daze" might well describe my early days in the school room. The school year began in the waning days of summer, but it was still hot. In the South, it is not the heat but the high humidity that makes it so uncomfortable at times. There was no air conditioning, not even electric fans. There was a row of large windows along the west side of the room allowing some breezes, but it was unshaded from the afternoon sun. Three grades met in a single room. It was stuffy and hard for little fellows, like me, to concentrate and keep eyes open, especially when the other classes were reciting.

The old Fosterville school building, where my mother attended, had been located on the east edge of Fosterville adjacent to the Lynch farm. It ended up being moved and becoming the upper part of Mr. Lynch's barn. The school building where I attended was a red brick building in the shape of an "H" with a wide portico in front. It was built in 1927 and 1928 in time for the 1928-29 school term. It was designed for a Junior High School, but after about two years, the High School students were bused to Christiana, leaving Fosterville with three teachers and sixty-five students. In 1953, all students were bused from Fosterville to Christiana. The building was bought and renovated by the Baptists.

My teacher for the first three years was Miss Sarah Gilbert. My classmates were: Samuel Albert Chrisman, Billie Ray Swafford, Carl White Walker, Sarah Stewart, and Alta Marie Smith. During the first grade, I carried my lunch in a little red, metal lunch box. During my second term, however, a lunch room was opened in the unfinished basement. My mother noted in her scrapbook that on that first day, we had green beans, creamed potatoes, cold slaw, corn bread, butter, and oranges. I recall Mrs. Mullins, our principal, giving a talk about how fortunate we were to have hot lunches for only .25 cents a week!

Sometimes, though, things would get exciting. A kid would be ushered into the cloak room and given a paddling for some *serious* infraction of the rules such as chewing gum in class, fighting on the school grounds, sassing the teacher, or throwing paper wads or spit balls. Sometimes, behind the teacher's back, we launched paper airplanes made by folding notebook paper. When Miss Sarah left the room, she gave strict orders to keep quiet and use our time studying. Then, as soon as she was out of sight, missiles were launched. Someone would keep watch, peeking through a crack in the door and warn everyone when she was returning. Miss Sarah

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wasn't dumb, though. She had only to look around the room and see all the paper wads and trash and know what had been going on. And it wasn't difficult to identify the culprits. It was usually those fellows who appeared so innocent, absorbed in reading the biggest textbook they had, behind which they attempted to hide their faces.

Other visitors to the cloakroom were boys or girls who had managed somehow to sit down in the middle of a patch of prickly pears in the school yard. Everyone would be alerted to the terrible tragedy upon hearing a woeful wail that might have been heard a mile away. It sounded as though someone was dying. With a face wet with tears and a nose running like a sugar tree, the unhappy victim would be led into the cloakroom and a couple of teachers would strip down his backside and, with tweezers, tenderly remove the tiny intruders. Ah, how grand the escape from boredom.

One day, when I was in the second or third grade, I was sitting alone in the school yard eating my lunch. A girl about my age came over and sat down beside me. We were talking when, suddenly, she said, "I'm going to searches you!" I was puzzled by what she said, but more by her mischievous expression. I didn't know what she thought she would find. I didn't have anything in my pockets. There was no loose change there - maybe some marbles, a piece of chalk or some rubber bands, but nothing I thought she would be interested in. So, I answered, "What do you mean? You're not going to searches me!" Smiling, she vowed, "Oh, yes I am!" And I kept saying, "Oh, no you're not!" Then the bell rang. Saved by the bell! I mentioned this to my mom when I got home and asked her, "What was she talking about?" She just smiled and said, "Don't pay her any attention."

My folks often warned me that if I got a spanking at school, I would get another when I got home. I believed that they meant it. The nearest thing that I got to getting spanked while in grade school at Fosterville was when Samuel Albert Chrisman and I threw rocks at a passing car. It turned out to be Frank Clark's A-Model Ford. There was no school speed zone in those days, and he was fairly flying. We were not trying to hit anything. Probably, we were playing like we were throwing grenades at passing Japs. But Frank didn't take it kindly. He screeched to a halt, turned around, came back to the school, and stormed into the principal's office. Soon, we were ushered into the principal's office with fear and trembling and given a strict talking to. As we left, I breathed a sigh of relief. At least I wouldn't be looking forward to a second spanking when I got home.

Both my mother and grandmother helped and encouraged me all through my schooling. That I get the best available education was my mother's determination. My grandmother was also a firm believer in education. She did not have much schooling herself, having only finished the eighth grade, but that was probably equal to High School in my day. After the death of her mother, she had the responsibility of helping to raise her younger siblings. But she spoke so often of *McGuffey's Readers*, *Smiley's*

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Arithmetic, and especially the *Blueback Speller*. She loved the *Blueback Speller*. So, in later years when the opportunity came, I bought one. She was the best speller that I had ever known. There was hardly a word given to her that she could not spell. She had been a champion speller in spelling bee contests. Even in her later years, if she came across a word with which she was not familiar, she would stop what she was doing, look it up in the dictionary, learn the proper spelling, pronunciation and meaning. She helped me with my spelling lessons and sometimes became perturbed because I didn't apply the same diligence to my spelling lessons as she did when a student in school.

I was much like the kid I heard about who said that his favorite subject was recess! At recess time, we played games, see-sawed, or rode the new merry-go-round. Sometimes we played "king of the mountain" or "anti-over". The girls liked to jump rope or play jacks on the porch. Some of the older girls played softball and practiced throwing a basketball through an outdoor hoop which was made out of the metal ring of a barrel. The boys liked to play baseball, which I was never good at. In fact, when the teams were chosen, I was always the last one selected. I had difficulty catching balls out in the field and would almost always strike out. It was humiliating. I became the object of jokes and ridicule, even from some unthinking or unfeeling adults. My dad felt for me and tried to help. Each Sunday afternoon, we would go outside and do batting practice. He would pitch, and I would bat. I didn't do badly because dad didn't try to scare me by throwing the ball too close to me or too hard. I couldn't understand why I couldn't play as well as the other boys. I finally gave up trying. It was not until I was fully grown, out of college and on my own, that I discovered that I was near-sighted. When I put on my new glasses, I was amazed at what I could see. I said to Jeanette: "Just think, I went all through grade school, high school, and college without being able to see well. I doubt that I could see much of what the teacher wrote on the chalkboard unless I sat up close." But it was something I did not suspect, and neither did anyone else. This taught me the valuable lesson of being sensitive to others' feelings. Never judge people nor make fun of their shortcomings or inadequacies, especially children, for it may undermine their confidence in themselves and contribute to future failure. It helped me to be more sympathetic.

In the sixth grade, I transferred to the Christiana school, catching the bus daily in front of my house. Mrs. Johns, my sixth grade teacher, was an older lady and badly crippled from a broken hip. But she was a good teacher and highly respected. I enjoyed the movies that we had several times each year. Here I remained until graduation from grammar school and then high school in 1950.

Oh, we had bullies back then just as every school has them now. I remember one in particular. He liked to pick on me because he thought I was passive and would not fight back. I might be standing up and leaning against the side of the building, minding my own business at recess, when he would saunter up with a big smile on his face, faking friendliness, and all of a sudden swing his leg so as to knock my feet

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from under me. Believe me, that ground was hard! And I probably carried around several bruises. But the time came when the worm turned, and I got my revenge--sweet revenge. We were in the auditorium one day when nobody else was around. He came up behind me and put his arm around my neck in a kind of arm lock and growled, "Hey, peckerwood, let's see what kind of stuff you're really made of!" I considered that a threatening move, and so, like in the movies, I grabbed his arm and went to my knees, throwing him over my head and down on the hard floor, flat of his back. He didn't know what hit him! He was addled for a while. After that, I had no more of that kind of trouble from him or anybody else at school. My folks would never go running to the teachers complaining. I was taught by my dad to take up for myself. I was never to pick a fight, but if one was forced on me, I was to defend myself. And I think the other kids, as well as teachers, respected me for it.

Funny things happen at school. In our English class, some of the students were using the word "ain't". It was "ain't this" or "ain't that". I raised my hand, and when the teacher recognized me, I said, "Uh, it *ain't* right to say *ain't*!" The class roared with laughter, and it was so embarrassing. My face probably turned several shades of red. It taught me a lesson, though: To keep my mouth shut and not try to be considered a smart aleck. The joke was on me.

In English class, we were given some required reading. I once chose a book about settlers moving westward in a wagon train. It was an interesting story and well-written. However, in the middle of it was a graphic sex scene. A young girl was raped by one of the older men. It was rather explicit. I was embarrassed and complained to the teacher. I did not feel that such a book should be on the required reading list. Her only reply was: "Well, Roy, you've got to learn. That's life." It may be life, I thought, but a perverted life. And I still say that teen-agers should not be exposed to such trash in school or anywhere else, for that matter. They have enough trouble with hormones without adding fuel to the fire!

During my grade school years, I was painfully shy. I suffered from severe stage fright when before an audience at church or at school. But while in high school, I grew out of this and gained more confidence and self-esteem, although I still could not participate in athletics. Neither was I the best of students. Looking back, I did not apply myself as I should have. But I got along with my teachers and classmates. I was honored to be selected as president of my class in both my Junior and Senior years. One year, I was chosen King of the Harvest Festival. I also had a leading part in our FFA activities. We participated in programs at Middle Tennessee State College and civic organizations in Murfreesboro. I was often pleased to be complimented by businessmen and civic leaders for my voice and delivery in public speaking. One businessman predicted that I would become a lawyer! I replied, "No sir, I'm going to be a preacher!"

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Characters Welcome

On a lighter note, our school welcomed characters, and we did have some real characters. Each of my fellow students was unique in his own way. **Billy Kelton** was one of the smartest students I ever knew. He was a straight "A" student. He used words that were real jaw-breakers. Sometimes, we only guessed what he was talking about. I think the same was true of some of his teachers. But Billy was about as clumsy as I was. That may be why we were such good friends. Kids today would probably consider us a couple of "nerds". Billy was a budding Baptist preacher and also became an educator. He taught for several years at Belmont College in Nashville. And, oh yes, we discussed religion from time to time.

There was still **Samuel Albert Chrisman** who was now throwing something besides rocks. How about kisses? As a teenager, he was considered somewhat of a Casanova. He liked the girls and the girls seemed to like him. Each afternoon, on the way home on the bus, he would usually sit with a certain pretty girl and try to steal kisses. She would pretend to try to push him away, but he was persistent. They really put on a show for the rest of us. She acted like she was really put-out with him. Funny thing, though - she always saved him a seat!

During the war, the old school buses were worn out. Often, we would go to meet the bus and it wouldn't show up. So, we found ways to get to school by ourselves. There were times that I walked down the railroad with some other students to Christiana school. There were other times that I rode my bicycle about five miles along the highway. Sometimes, we would catch a ride with an older student who had a car or the use of his parents' car. **Kenneth Adcock** was driving his parents' new 1946 Chevrolet one day. We all piled in and Kenneth took off, spinning the tires. He was trying to keep up with our principal, Mr. Gault, who had come to Fosterville to pick up a carload of kids in his new Mercury. When Kenneth got to the Christiana lane, he was going too fast and the car hit some gravel and almost slid into the Holden filling station that was located at the intersection at that time. It scared us all, but Kenneth was scared more than anyone else. It was a close call.

One time, as I recall, the bus arrived, but for some reason, it was being driven by an older student, **Earl Morgan**. The old bus didn't have brakes. Earl had to gear it down to get it stopped. I have often wondered what parents would do today if their children had to ride to school in an old broken-down bus like we had to. Even under those conditions, nobody got hurt that I know of, and nobody complained.

Kenneth Summers was one of my fellow students. He was about a year older than I. He and his family moved into Aunt Grace's house just down the road from us after she remarried. There were two or three other children in the family. The father worked, but they seemed to have a hard time getting by. Kenneth was a handsome and personable young man. He often went to church with us and almost always brought along his brothers and sisters. In time, he became a Christian. I never heard

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anyone accuse him of any wrong-doing. He worked at odd jobs around the school for lunch money for himself and his siblings. He was popular in school and a good athlete. One time, our FFA team went to a businessmen's meeting in Murfreesboro to present a debate. The proposition was about whether or not to set out shrubs in the schoolyard. I don't remember which side Kenneth was arguing, but evidently, because of nervousness, he kept on talking about "*scrubs*" instead of "*shrubs*". The rest of us were sitting there sniggering and trying to keep a straight face. He finished the debate without realizing his mistake.

Kenneth graduated a year ahead of me and immediately joined the Navy. He was sent to San Diego, California for basic training. It seemed that he had a glowing future ahead of him. But one day, we were shocked to learn that he had been killed in a terrible automobile accident. His family had, in the meantime, moved to Slaughters, Kentucky where his body was shipped for interment. Brother Clifford Brothers, Sr. was called upon to preach his funeral, and several of the boys from school, including myself, went as pall bearers. One of his former schoolmates who was also in the Navy accompanied the body and made the flag presentation to the grieving family. It was a sad occasion for all of us. This experience impressed upon me that death is no stranger to youth and that one should so live as to be prepared for death at any age. I also learned that some things like that happen and are simply not explainable. The "why?" remains unanswered. All we can do is to have faith and accept it. There will come a time when we will all understand God's plan and purposes.

A Few Brave Teachers

Even among our teachers, we had some characters. During the war, there was a shortage of teachers. The School Board was hiring just about anybody they could find. Some were unqualified. Some retired teachers were brought back into service. One of them was **Miss Sally Miller**. She had been one of my dad's teachers when he was a student. Probably due to her age and bad health, she was impatient and short-tempered. Her favorite method of punishment was pulling hair. Suddenly, without warning, she would grab a handful of hair and jerk it around until the student was almost scalped. There was a girl in our class who could not talk plainly. Miss Sally tried to help her, but when the girl could not pronounce a word correctly, she would lose what little patience she had and shake her by the hair until the girl was in tears. I felt so sorry for her. One of Miss Sally's favorite expressions was "balled up". It meant "confused". If one was having a hard time understanding something or was confused, she would say he or she was all "balled up". Miss Sally was not the finest teacher I ever had. She got herself "all balled up" at times, but I do believe she tried hard under difficult circumstances.

After the war, we had better-trained male teachers, which were sorely needed. **Mr. Bill Taylor** had been a Sergeant in the Army, although he was near-sighted and

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wore thick glasses. Other than that, he certainly looked the role of an Army Sergeant. He was a big man and looked mean and tough! But, in reality, he was likable and had a good sense of humor. Without his glasses, though, he was blind as a bat! Trouble was, he always wore them! And there was nothing wrong with his hearing, either. We couldn't get away with anything! We suspected that he had 20/20 vision in the back of his head! All his students soon came to know that he was fair but would not put up with a lot of foolishness. They respected him for it. He taught classes and coached.

Mr. Thomas G. Gault returned from the service to become principal of the Christiana school. He was a good man and took his job seriously, but I used to wonder by the way he looked and sometimes acted if he was not suffering from mild shell-shock as so many of the veterans did.

Mr. Mack Looney was our Agriculture teacher. I was helping our neighbor, Lee Chrisman haul hay one summer day when I saw a stranger walking across the field toward us. It turned out to be Mr. Looney, and he was looking for me. He got acquainted with all his students and their parents before school started. This made a big impression on my family and me. He was a good teacher. With a name like "Looney", he had to be!

Mrs. Rutherford was from "up Nawth". For several years, she had been on the faculty at Indiana University in Bloomington in the communications department. She decided to take some time off and seek a change of scenery. She chose Rutherford County, although she knew nothing about it, nor did she know anyone who lived there. She explained that she saw the name on a map and, since it was the same as hers, she decided that this would be her stopping place for a while. She was probably one of the best teachers I ever had. She worked with the students and put on a performance one time at that little country school that you wouldn't believe! She had a kind of belly laugh that she used when she was pleased with our performance. It was a delight when she gave the unusual laugh, and it encouraged us to do our best. She got me interested in training in speech communication.

There were other teachers who had a positive influence upon my life. I believe most of them took their jobs seriously and did their best. I have always looked upon teaching, like preaching, as a calling. It is too bad that so much authority has been taken away from teachers so that they cannot discipline unruly students as needed. In fact, I gave serious consideration to becoming a teacher. I prepared myself to teach while in college, but it just didn't work out that way. William A. Ward made this observation about different kinds of teachers:

The mediocre teacher tells,
The good teacher explains,
The superior teacher demonstrates,
The great teacher inspires.

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During high school, I sometimes did volunteer work for the school. Honestly, it was a good way to skip some classes! One job we did was to tear down a barrack at the old Classification Center located where The Hundred Oaks Shopping Center is now located in Nashville. The building was given to the school to be used to build some classrooms for the agriculture classes and a wood-working shop. The School District was evidently working on a shoe string!

I graduated from High School in 1950 in a class of twelve. We cried a little and vowed to keep in touch with one another, but you know how that goes. We didn't. Some of us had been together from the first grade. Farewell, Earline, Ben, Iris, Cornelia, David, Samuel Albert, Charlotte, Fay, Ramsey, Bobby, and Tilman. Until we meet again. Believe it or not, these "characters" all turned out well and made good, productive citizens. Surprisingly, nobody ended up in the pen!

DLC and Me

After high school, I enrolled in David Lipscomb College (now University) where I majored in History and minored in Speech and Bible. I graduated in 1954. In those days, DLC exerted a tremendous influence for the cause of Christ in Middle Tennessee, many other states, and even reaching all around the world. Some of the most powerful and dedicated preachers I knew were graduates of DLC. During my four years there, hundreds of young men were preparing to preach the gospel. Some were highly talented--A. T. Pate, Tom Holland, Ted Kell, Harold Taylor, Bill Moore, and J. C. Choate to mention just a few. On weekends, these young men and some of the teachers would fan out in all directions and preach for congregations within driving distance of Nashville. Sometimes, they would carpool. Returning late Sunday night or Monday morning, they were ready for another week of classes. The teachers and even some of the students were often called upon for gospel meetings. It was not uncommon for some to have classes all day and then drive a hundred miles or so to preach in the evenings. The good that was done is incalculable, and Lipscomb enjoyed the good will and support of most churches of Christ, not only in Middle Tennessee, but all over the brotherhood.

When I was a student at Lipscomb, the annual lectureship was an event looked forward to and widely supported. Students were encouraged to attend and take notes. No one needed to be concerned about the truth not being taught. No one even slightly questionable was invited to participate. For example, the 1948 lectureship featured Anthony Emmons, E. W. Clevenger, George W. DeHoff, Harold Thomas, Ira North, James O. Baird, Jr., C. M. Pullias, Batsell Barrett Baxter, Avis Wiggins, Harris Dark, Marshall Keeble, and others.

Brother David Lipscomb was the founder of Nashville Bible Institute which later became David Lipscomb College, now University. I have heard it said that Brother Lipscomb never intended for his school to be a "preacher factory". He saw

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the need of making Christian education available for both young men and women, regardless of what they planned to do with their lives. It is true that Brother Lipscomb was opposed to training "professional" preachers or "pastors" as was happening in the Christian church. He believed that this would eventually lead the church into digression. He believed that preachers should be able to support themselves while preaching the gospel wherever they went. But, he was not opposed to teaching and training young men so that they would be better equipped to preach the gospel. In fact, he encouraged it. That was one of the reasons the old Nashville Bible School was established. In the 1984-1895 catalog (*Gospel Advocate Publishing Company*, Nashville, Tenn., 1894), a short history is given of the first three sessions. In the first session, thirty-two students were enrolled, *"twenty-four of whom were expecting to spend their lives in the ministry of the word"*. He also reported that, during the vacation that followed this session, they led more than two-hundred people to Christ. In the second session, there were thirty-two students *"studying for the ministry of the word"* and they *"led more than five hundred souls to Christ, and established six churches"*. The third session was much the same. Forty-one out of fifty-two students were studying for the ministry. Thus, it is clear that one of the main purposes of the school was to prepare men to preach the gospel. That was also true when I was a student there and for many years afterward.

The Nashville Bible School was chartered on the second day of February 1901. In it, there is this clause:

"The supreme purpose of the school shall be to teach the Bible as the revealed word of God to man...to train those who attend in a pure Bible Christianity excluding from the faith all opinions and philosophies of men, and from the work and worship of the church of God all human inventions and devices..."

That should settle the notion as to what the "supreme purpose" was that Lipscomb had in mind. Recognizing the importance of continual Christian faithfulness among the leadership of the school in order for it to succeed, Brother Lipscomb wisely included in the original charter and then in the deed conveying his farm to the school the following stipulation:

"All directors of said corporation, or trustees of the school, and regular members of the faculty, shall be members of the Church of Christ, in full sympathy with the teachings above set forth, and desirous to carry them out. Anyone failing to have the qualifications shall resign or be removed." (Emphasis is mine, R. B.)

Not long before her death, my mother and I discussed the difficulties I had as a

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student at Lipscomb, and she commented, "But I never heard you say anything about quitting." I had never thought of it before, but it was true. It isn't in my nature to quit anything I start, even when the going gets rough. I was always taught to "hoe to the end of the row".

CHAPTER XIV

"THEY DON'T MAKE 'EM LIKE THEY USED TO"

"The way to make automobiles is to make one automobile like another automobile, to make them all alike, to make them come through the factory just alike." -Henry Ford⁴⁷

Talking about cars, I used to hear old timers say: "They don't make 'em like they used to!" Usually, the retort was: "Let's be thankful they don't!" They used to have parts that many of today's youngsters never heard of. How about fenders? Or running boards? What about large, chrome grills and shiny steel bumpers that actually can withstand a *bump*? How about a rumble seat? Remember the bullet-nose cars and car fins and miniature wings? How about the car that looked like an upside down bathtub on wheels. If you remember cars like that, you are certainly not a spring chicken! I used to love riding on the running board or on the front fender with my legs draped around the exterior headlight. I don't know if it was illegal or not. If not, it probably should have been.

I have always loved cars. My grandmother could remember the first car she had seen. It was probably traveling down the nearby turnpike. I once asked her to tell me about early cars and what they looked like. She replied, "Oh, they looked about like cars now-a-days." Of course, they didn't. By then, there had been a lot of improvements, but she either didn't remember or wasn't interested in getting into a discussion of something she wasn't particularly interested in or knew little about. To her, all cars looked alike if they had a motor, a steering wheel, and four wheels on the ground. I studied cars. I looked them over from bumper to bumper and under the hood. Even at night, lying bed, I would listen to cars and trucks coming up the hill and passing the house. I could tell by the sound of the engine what make it was and usually who owned it.

That New Car Fever

During the war, new cars were not available. Used cars, good or worn out, sold at premium. By 1945, when the war ended, most cars were worn out. Some people were still driving old beat-up cars that were made as far back as the teens and twenties. The average age of a car was about eight years. It was still a common sight to see folks come to church or go to the store on horseback, in buggies, and even farm wagons. But when the war ended, the automobile factories resumed to making automobiles. With much fanfare, the 1946 models began to roll off the assembly line and to show up in showrooms everywhere. But for a few years, there were not

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enough produced to meet the demand of a car-hungry nation. My dad signed up for a new Ford, but there were 150 names ahead of him on the waiting list. After a long wait, only a few cars were delivered. It was thought that most cars were sold on the black market for much more than the sticker price. My dad switched to number twelve on a waiting list at the Bob Overall dealership in Murfreesboro for a new Plymouth. Still, he had to patiently await delivery for about a year. Slowly, new, shiny cars began appearing on the highways and even in our own neighborhood. Some of the early cars were delivered without bumpers. There was a shortage of chrome in 1946 because of a strike, and we saw cars that had 2 x 4's for bumpers.

Albert Alderson was probably the first one to get a car. He traded his old '42 Nash for a new one. It looked very much like the old one. There was very little change between the '42 and the '46 models among all the makes. But folks didn't seem to mind. Mr. Huse Harris bought a maroon-colored Ford. Sam Watkins bought a new Studebaker. Mr. Estell Adcock got a new two-door Chevrolet sedan. It was also maroon or wine-colored. I was glad for Mr. Estell and his wife because they didn't have a car and always traveled to church or the store in a buggy with their son, Kenneth, standing up behind them or riding along behind on his bicycle. Mr. & Mrs. Nance were a stately-looking elderly couple who drove an ancient '29 Chevrolet. But no more. One Sunday, they drove to church in a brand-new "merry" Oldsmobile. We anxiously waited our turn. It seemed as though it would never happen. But slowly, we advanced on the list until we were number one. Finally, our turn came. Dad saw it being driven around the square in Murfreesboro one morning on his way to work in Nashville. That afternoon, he stopped and picked up his car. By that time, the dealership had loaded it down with just about every extra - radio, twin heaters, sun visor, chrome rims on the wheels, fog lights - the works. He gave them a check for \$1,750.00 and drove it home to a happy and excited family. But I thought he looked sick. It was a big chunk of his savings - a lot of money in those days. The 1947 Plymouth was a Special Deluxe, a beautiful shade of dark green - the favorite color of new cars that year. We just stood there *oohing* and *aahing*, afraid to touch it. We were so proud. Who can ever forget the smell of a new car. I felt rich. We just had to show it off to our relatives and friends. Everybody just went on over it. One old fellow said it had everything on it except a toilet! Aunt Euda Smith just clasped her hands together over her bosom and exclaimed, "It's just so pretty, it hurts!"

Our neighbor, Sam Black Bingham, later brought a bright yellow Studebaker pickup truck. It was a beauty. Just one hitch, though - Sam Black had never bothered to learn to drive! He had gone through the war and still didn't know how to drive a car! He and Bessie had a baby girl. Sam asked me to drive for him. We went to different places, but what I remember most was going to gospel meetings at night. As a typical teenager, I enjoyed driving the yellow pickup and the time we all spent together. But Sam soon taught himself to drive. He would get into his truck and drive around in front of his house, until he got the hang of shifting gears and going in

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reverse.

Although, basically, 1946 cars were of pre-war design, they had come a long way since the teens and twenties. Styles, designs, and engineering had changed dramatically. Many improvements were made in the operation, ride, and comfort, although they, too, are now antiquated. However, they are still in much demand by antique and classic car collectors. The first major change in design was by Studebaker in 1947. It had a large curved-about rear window and not a few jokes were made about whether it was coming or going. In 1950, it became the butt of more jokes about its "bullet nose". Jokes or not, they sold well.⁴⁸ In 1949, other cars came to the showroom floor sporting new styles. One I well remember in the early 50's was the "upside-down" style of the Nash. Hudson came out with a step-down style that generated a lot of interest.⁴⁹

Surprisingly, the most dramatic changes and improvements came about in the '30s during the Great Depression.⁵⁰ New car sales were way down, and some car makers did not survive, such as the Graham, Hupmobile, and Pierce-Arrow. However, those who did survive were those who kept up sales by making yearly model changes and keeping the prices affordable.

Henry Ford was the one most responsible for changing the automobile from a rich man's toy to one that ordinary people could afford. His creation was affectionately known as "The Tin Lizzie". He called it the "Universal Car". It was a homely contraption, but it could run circles around other early makes of cars. He started the assembly line concept, getting this idea from seeing how beef was moved about in the slaughter house. Each worker along the assembly line had just one task to perform on each car as they continued moving on down the line. Henry paid his workers the unheard-of salary of \$5.00 per day! According to tradition, Ford said that a person had the choice of any color of car, "as long as it was black".

The early model cars were upright carriages instead of a streamline design. Indeed, they were first called "horseless carriages". This describes the model-T Ford which I still remember and admire. They originally sold for less than \$500. I used to hear my dad talk about driving the T-model. He said that, often, it would not go forward up a steep hill, but that it would back up it! It had something to do with gear ratio. It was probably the most versatile car ever built. Kits were sold to turn it into a tractor. A farmer could use it in the field plowing in the morning and go to town in it in the afternoon! It could also be used to grind feed or generate electricity. It would even run on a cheap solution of kerosene and old candle ends. During the teens, the T's had soft tops and no roll-up windows. They did not have such frills as windshield wipers or rear-view mirrors. They were easily repaired, though, because they were so simply built. Mr. & Mrs. Wheelhouse of the Midland Community owned a T-model coupe. Mr. and Mrs. Pruitt lived just down the road from us. They drove a 1927 Chevrolet coup. I don't imagine that it was ever driven over 25 or 30 mph. It was kept up nicely and almost looked new in the early forties. For many years, it was on

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display at Jackson Chevrolet in Murfreesboro.

There were lots of A-model Fords around when I was a child. The first major model change for Ford was in 1927 after twenty years of building T-models. It was received enthusiastically. Culley Beasley, my dad's cousin, owned the Ford dealership in Murfreesboro during the Depression. During that time, my dad bought a second-hand A-model from him, probably a '27 or '28 model. As I recall, he traded a bull for it. It was just a basic, black, four-door sedan, but it was transportation. It gave him problems, though. There were times he had to crank it to get it started because he couldn't afford a new battery. Cranking a car was risky business. Not a few received injuries and broken arms when the engine misfired. I even saw Dad in winter weather trying to thaw it out by building a fire under it! It's a wonder that he had not set it afire and blown it up! During the war, gas and tires were rationed. I remember that we went to Murfreesboro one day and had several flats before we got there. Dad had a spare tire mounted on the back, but it was worn out, too! In those days, there was no roadside service. The flats had to be fixed by the driver at the roadside. The car had to be jacked up, the wheel taken off, the tire removed, the thing causing the puncture removed, and the hole in the inner tube located by placing it in water or by spit! The patch was then applied and the inner tube reinserted into the tire. The tire was pumped up by a hand air pump and the wheel and tire put back on the car. It was a major operation, but Dad became an expert at it. He finally quit driving the old car, kept it in the shed for a while, and then sold it during the war for \$15. We went back to walking or catching rides to wherever we wanted to go.

One of the finest examples of an A-model that I ever saw was owned by a man who lived near New Hermon in Bedford County. Rarely driven, it was a well-kept, four-door sedan with every accessory available. It is no telling what that car would be worth as an antique on today's market.

It is hard for most young people of today to imagine the difficulty in driving an automobile in the early days. Mere starting was a chore. The choke had to be pulled out so that the mixture in the carburetor would be rich enough to start the engine. There was also a throttle that had to be adjusted for a smooth idle during warm-up. Before 1930, the ignition timing had to be retarded for starting. The starter was separate from the ignition key. It was usually a pedal on the floor. After starting, the spark control was adjusted back home and the choke and throttle gradually closed.

In the 20's and 30's, there were no such things as power steering, power brakes, turn signals, automatic transmissions, or even windshield wipers. The horsepower was low, even on big trucks. There were no factory-installed radios, heaters or defrosters until the mid thirties. Squeaks and rattles were common. The ride was rough by today's standards. Tune-ups were required more often, usually about every 10,000 miles. Tires lasted about that long. There were no such things as steel-belted tires. It was hard to keep an alignment. Change of oil and lubrication was needed about every 500 to 1,000 miles. Also, new cars couldn't be driven over 30 mph

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during their break-in period.

In those days, "service stations" offered real service. They offered "full service". The old Texaco TV ads showed a car driving up to the gasoline pumps and two or three attendants busing filling it with fuel, checking under the hood, checking air pressure in the tires, and washing the windshield. A friend of mine who owned a station in those days claimed that he didn't make much from the sale of gasoline, but from the sale of oil, replacing worn out tires, and making minor repairs. I predict that not far in the future, someone will come up with the novel idea of a down-to-earth "service station" and make millions! They'll make a comeback like the old-fashioned "drive-ins".

Mr. Ford's Farm Revolution

Much of what was said of automobiles could also be said of tractors and other farm machinery. Mechanized farming, along with the TVA, brought about a revolution in southern agriculture. Henry Ford was interested in farming. He was reared on a farm and owned a 200-acre farm near Detroit. He was interested in improving tractors, making them available to the small farmer. When I was a small boy, most farmers in our neighborhood had teams of horses and mules. In 1940, there were only about 1.5 million tractors in use throughout the whole nation, but within the next seventeen years, that number almost tripled.⁵¹ After the war, farmers were not only ready to buy new cars and trucks, but also tractors and all kinds of modern farm machinery. There were not many tractors in our neighborhood when I was growing up. The Jones family, a father and a couple sons, one of them Mitch, had a big farm on the Bell Buckle Road just south of Soapstone. They had several old tractors with metal wheels instead of tires. They would on go about five or six miles per hour wide open. They were hard to steer, and there was a danger of flipping over backwards when a plow hit an underground rock or some other obstacle. I had seen tractors powered by steam, usually used to transport and run stationary threshing machines. Gasoline tractors were used for the same purpose. Wheat was brought up to the thresher in wagons pulled by teams. Often, the teams would be spooked by the sound of engine and the long belt between the tractor and the thresher and shy away. Sometimes, they were hard to control until they got used to the noise. After the war, however, all that changed rather quickly. Farmers began to invest in the new and improved tractors and other farm equipment. Macon Brothers was one of the first that I recall. He bought a big two-cylinder John Deere. You could hear the *putt-putt* of his tractor all over the neighborhood. Uncle Wallis Powell bought a Ford 8-N. This model was a spin-off from the Ford-Ferguson and the Ferguson which were introduced in the late thirties.⁵² We called them "red belly" Fords because the motor, transmission, and axles were painted red and the rest was light gray in color. They were smaller tractors, but very versatile and dependable. With its low center of

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gravity, it was especially adaptable to hill country. Farmers who had steep hills began keeping them mowed for pasture using the 8-N, wheels extended for stability, and a bush hog. They would mow straight up and down the hillside instead of sideways. The countryside began to look much better. A few years ago, I visited the Henry Ford Museum near Detroit and saw all kinds of antique farm machinery, but was surprised that a Ford 8-N wasn't on display! I have often wondered why. The 8-N was one of the best tractors ever built, and it revolutionized farming, especially among small farmers. After 50 years, I bought one! It runs as good today as it did when it was new and has power galore. I use it for mowing, bush hogging, post hole digging with an auger, and other jobs around my home. But it cost me about three times as much as it cost when it was new! They are still in great demand. I agree: They don't make 'em like they used to.

My First Driving Lesson

"O.K., boy, let's see what you can do." Dad and I were settling into the front seat of our '47 Plymouth. It was still shiny and smelled new. I was in my glory seated under the steering wheel. Probably against his better judgment, Dad finally caved in to months of my pestering him to teach me how to drive our new car. I was old enough, I argued. After all, I was *sixteen* going on thirty! I could be a lot of help going to the store and running errands, I reasoned. I could take Mom and Mammy places when Dad was unavailable, I persuaded. I thought up a lot of arguments. Only, I didn't mention dating, but I'm sure they had already taken that into consideration.

"Now then," he began, "always drive with both hands on the steering wheel, and keep your eyes on the road."

"Like this?"

"When you turn or come to a stop," he continued, "you must let the driver behind you know what you're going to do. Do you know the signals?"

"Yes, sir!" I replied, and gave a demonstration.

"Yeah, that's the way. Now, push down on the brake peddle and push the clutch all the way to the floorboard. Pull out on the choke about half-way."

"O.K."

"Before starting the engine," he continued, "you need to shift the gear into neutral."

I had practiced this before, shifting the gears into first, second, third and reverse. So, I pulled the steering column gear shift down from reverse to where it felt loose.

"Now," Dad instructed, "push the starter button." The '47 Plymouths had a starter button on the left side of the dash instead of on the floor board.

I obeyed, and the car gave a forward lurch, throwing our heads back against the seat.

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"You didn't have it out of gear," Dad said, surprisingly calm and collected. That was due to change, however.

"Here, let me show you." Reaching over, he jiggled the gear shift until it was in neutral and let me feel the difference between being in gear and out of gear.

"Let's try it again. Do as I say. Keep your right foot on the brake and push the clutch with your left foot all the way to the floorboard. O.K.? Now, push the starter button."

The engine came to life--all ninety-two horses. "We're ready to go!" Dad said. "With the clutch depressed, reach down with your left hand and release the hand brake. Now, taking your foot off the brake peddle, press down on the gas peddle to rev up the engine while, at the same time, *sloooow-ly* letting out on the clutch. Remember, *sloooooow-ly*."

The engine revved up like a race car getting ready to start off, purring like a kitten at first, it began roaring like a lion as I pressed the gas peddle to the floor. My foot slipped off the clutch with a clang, and our heads almost landed in the back seat! The car violently jumped forward a few feet, spinning its wheels in the gravel driveway. The cows in the barnyard quit grazing and stared curiously. My dogs, Jerry and Bingo, ran for cover. It lurched a couple of times toward the open door of the garage, I hit the brake, and then the engine stalled.

"Whoa!" Dad yelled. He probably said it the same way he yelled at Rat and Jack, his mule team. "I thought I told you let out on that clutch *sloooooow-ly*," he complained.

"Yes, sir! Sorry, sir! I'll do it the next time."

"Let's try her again," Dad said, taking a deep breather and trying awfully hard to be calm and encouraging.

Well, we went through the same motions a couple of times more until I began to get the hang of it. Finally, we got started off with a few less violent jumps and lurches and leaving a little less rubber in the driveway. I sat up strait, barely able to see over the steering wheel. I got the car pointed in the right direction and drove down the driveway to the main road.

"Brake, brake!" Dad shouted. "Take that foot off the accelerator, and push in on that brake! Push in on the clutch to keep the engine from stalling. And remember to always come to a complete stop and look both ways before entering the roadway."

"Yes, sir!" I replied.

Nothing was coming either way, and so we proceeded on down the road toward Fosterville. A narrow gravel road, it led westward down a fairly steep hill almost in front of our house. We were moving along at five or ten miles per hour, and Dad kept saying, "Slow down, slow down. Keep your foot off the gas peddle and on that brake. Don't get too fast, now. Take it easy!"

At the bottom of the hill was the Fosterville cemetery, and the fencerows on both sides were grown up, making it difficult for even one car to get through. Minnie

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Pearl of the Grand Ole Opry used to claim to come from Grinder's Switch. Believe it or not, Grinder's Switch is a real place in Tennessee. It gets its name from having roads with bushes like millions of tentacles reaching out from either side. This stretch of road was much like that. Then we saw what we were dreading to see. A big truck was rapidly coming to meet us, slinging rocks, and leaving behind a cloud of thick dust.

"Pull over right here and stop," Dad commanded.

"That's Buddy Gamble's dad. He drives like a maniac," I said.

"Give him plenty of room to pass."

I did as he said, pulling over with two wheels in a shallow ditch as the truck flew on past. Shifting into low gear and checking my rear-view mirror, I started to pull back onto the roadway when I heard a sickening sound of *scrrrratch*. It was a scrawny bush sticking out its limbs like bony fingers to dare to scrape our new car. Did I put the first scratch on our car? I felt so bad. Dad said, "Ah, well, a little compound will take that out." It helped me feel some better.

On down the road we drove.

A fast walker could have easily passed us. But Dad kept on warning: "Slow down. Take it easy, now!" We came around the "S" curve as we entered the unofficial "city limits", and there she was -- Aunt Easter. She was walking down the middle of the road, as was her custom. It was useless to sound the horn for she was almost completely deaf. "She can't hear it thunder," Dad said. "Just get over as far as you can and ease by her.

But watch out. No telling what she'll do!" So, I shifted into low gear and eased by her. She never gave an inch. She kept on walking as if she owned the road, giving us a friendly smile as we inched by.

We crossed the railroad tracks and drove down "Main Street" in front of the stores where several men and boys were gathered. I was somewhat embarrassed, knowing that they saw Dad giving me driving lessons. I tried to ignore their grins as we passed by and to keep my mind on what I was doing. There were two railroad crossings, one steeper than the other. We came across the steeper one and started up the other one on our way back home. Looking both ways to make sure the way was clear and no train was coming, I started to shift into second gear and give the car more gas to get up on and across the tracks. But, instead of second gear, I pushed it into reverse. I gave it the gas and we flew backward, almost driving my face into the



Roy, Jr. and new '47 Plymouth

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steering wheel.

"Whoa!" Dad shouted, reaching over with his number 10's, squishing my foot against the brake peddle. Gravel was flying in all directions as we slid to a stop. Woe to anyone who might have been behind us. When the dust cleared and Dad caught his breath, he exclaimed, "Anybody can do that!" In his youth, Dad could curse like a sailor. Now, he was a Christian and was trying hard to control his tongue. But I am sure that, on this occasion, he was sorely tempted to backslide! Not only that, but I could feel the eyes of Fosterville upon me. Yes, sir! They don't make 'em like they used to! And I'm glad!

CHAPTER XV

VOICE OF THE DOODLEBUG

Of all creatures large and small, I know that God made them all. - Unknown

It was the fulfillment of a dream of a lifetime. I was in Egypt on one of my tours of the lands of the Bible. My group and I had left Cairo with its ancient pyramids and had flown south four hundred miles to the city of Luxor, along the shores of the upper Nile. In ancient times, it was called Thebes, the capital of Egypt. First on the agenda was to tour the ruins of the temple which was the largest religious building ever built. There was even a good-sized lake within temple compound. It was amazing. I saw two or three of my traveling companions standing over by a column with some kind of stone carving on top. They were talking with our Egyptian guide who was telling them that this represented a scarab, one of the gods of the ancient Egyptians. I looked it over carefully, and then announced: "I know what that is! That's a doodlebug!"

They just stood there looking at me strangely, trying to decide if I was joking. I assured them that I was indeed serious and that I recognized a doodlebug whenever I saw one. Only a farm boy, especially one who grew up with cattle in the hills of Tennessee, would be able to recognize a doodlebug. Now, I don't know if a doodlebug is the same as a scarab or not, but they sure are look-alikes. The Egyptians did raise cattle, and where cattle are, there are doodlebugs. As a boy, I used to watch them by the hour. They had an appetite for fresh cow patties. They would roll it up into a ball about the size of a marble and push it with their hind legs to their nests. Upon hearing this story, my wife exclaimed: "Who would want to worship a doodlebug?" The Egyptians did. They were the most polytheistic people who ever lived. They had all kinds of gods, and many of those idols are still right there in the temple at Luxor. They saw something wonderfully unique in different animals and insects. They saw how each was perfectly designed and equipped to serve a special purpose to the benefit of mankind. Design should have led them to look for a Designer, but it didn't. Instead, it led them to admire, to adore, and then to eventually worship the creature rather than the Creator.⁵³ One appeal of idolatry is that it was something they could see and, in their imaginations, make it into what they wanted it to be. This is the reason why idols take on human characteristics and frailties.

God has always placed importance upon little things, but man is more often impressed with bigness. The Jews called upon Jesus for a sign, to do something big, spectacular, and they said, "We'll believe." But Jesus knew better. He knew that there was not anything that would overcome their hardness of heart. He knew they would not believe, even if they witnessed something sensational, (actually, what would be

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more sensational than healing the sick and raising the dead?) and so he told them that no such sign would be given to that wicked generation. Instead of big things or elaborate demonstrations, God has placed emphasis on the power of little things: the ant, the coney, even a "small, still voice".

The doodlebug is small and insignificant, but it has a great voice. Hear the voice of the doodlebug-a clear voice that says, "I, too, am one of God's creatures. I am perfect for the purpose for which I am made. I am evidence of the power, glory, and majesty of God."

God has revealed Himself to mankind in not just one, but two great books: The Bible and the book called nature. Before we had the Bible, mankind had the book of nature. The Jews had the written law of Moses, but not the Gentiles. However, Paul declared that ignorance was no excuse for not accepting God's "eternal power and Godhead", for He had revealed Himself unto them "by the things that are made" (Romans 1:20). Ignorance results in superstition, and superstition produces all kinds of error. However, the evidence given by God, whether in written form or in nature, is sufficient to produce faith to those who honestly seek the truth. But we today are blessed: Not only do we have the book of nature, but also God's written word, the Bible. So, doubly, we are without excuse. Without the Bible, we would know little about the Father and nothing about His Son nor of the Holy Spirit and His work. This is something that even the Old Testament prophets longed to know about but died without that knowledge.

James Jones, my colleague, shared with me a story he heard told by a friend of ours, the late Bill Johnson. Bill was preaching for a congregation one time where he met an avid agnostic. He had tried talking with the man, but without any positive results. However, he cultivated his friendship, and, one day, they went fishing together. While sitting on the bank, Bill saw a doodlebug coming along. He put his hand down to block his way, but the doodlebug simply went around and kept on going. He tried it again, and the doodlebug responded the same way. Bill called this to his friend's attention. He said, "Look here at this foolish bug. I put my hand in front of him and he goes around it. He doesn't bump into it. He doesn't try to go over it. He doesn't turn around and go back. He simply goes around it and keeps on going in the same direction. I wonder how that bug knows to do that? Wonder where he got that kind of intelligence?" They talked about it for a while and went home. Some time later, that man became a Christian. He later explained that the intelligence displayed by that doodlebug caused him to rethink his position. He came to the conclusion that the bug's intelligence must have come from some source, and that there was only one source that it could have come from - God.

Man has always been strangely fascinated by idolatry. At first, all men worshiped the Creator, but, strangely, after several generations, their descendants gradually turned to idolatry. The Egyptians were not the only idolaters. Even the children of Israel, the descendants of father Abraham, were influenced by their

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neighbors while in Egypt to worship various idols from time to time. Even after the beginning of the Christian dispensation, idolatry flourished in the Roman world and elsewhere. There are many reasons for this shift of devotion from God to idolatry, one of them being the absence of strong moral standards in idolatry. Man has never liked the restraint from doing what he wants to do. His tendency is to rebel. But after the coming of Christ and His death and resurrection, gradually, the Christian faith began to take hold. The British Isles and Scotland were evangelized. The Druids and others turned from idols to the worship of the one God. But after a few hundred years, there was a falling away from the faith as was predicted in the writings of the Apostle Paul. By the fourteenth century, Catholicism had become so corrupt that "protestors" arose and Protestantism emerged. But in time this movement split up and divided into many different denominations. Many immigrated to the colonies in America.

The majority of those who first came to these shores and inhabited this land had faith in God. Not all came to America for religious purposes, but many did. In the northern half of the Atlantic coastline, there was Plymouth Rock and the Puritans who came seeking religious freedom. The Quakers who settled Pennsylvania came for basically the same reason. But farther south, those who came to the ports of Virginia and the Carolinas came mostly for economic reasons. Many came to these shores as indentured servants. They worked for a number of years on southern plantations in return for sea passage to the new world. Most of them were from England and were Protestants. They brought their faith with them and shared it with one another and with the natives as the continually moved westward. They found gaps in the western mountain range with mile-high peaks and moved on into Kentucky and Tennessee. Churches sprang up wherever they settled. Schools were established. Charitable works flourished, and the mountains, hills, and valleys reverberated with their singing and preaching. So it was with settlers in the Soapstone area. They had freedom to practice their faith without fear and to share it with others.

While growing up, I never knew an atheist or an agnostic. There may have been some, but if so, they kept quiet. I couldn't imagine anyone not believing in God, nor accepting Jesus Christ as His Son. Rural people are, by nature, more religious than those in urban areas, and there is a reason for it. Those in rural areas live close to nature where they constantly come into contact with God's handiwork-like the doodlebug. Aside from the Bible, nature's evidence is so convincing. When the doodlebug speaks, people listen.

Fosterville Churches

According to a recent article in *Newsweek Magazine*⁵⁴, in 1890, 34% of Americans belonged to a formal church. In 1970, that figure rose to 64%. I assume

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those figures to be fairly accurate, over all, but I don't believe that it would hold true to the folks of Soapstone and most other rural areas in the late 1800's. Back then, church-going was an important thing in the lives of most of the people, although, granted, some attended for merely social fulfillment. We are not speaking of everyone, of course, but the vast majority. Not everyone tried to live the Christian life, but many did. They tried to honor their faith and the faith of their fathers.

Among the early settlers were the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and perhaps a few others. There was a Presbyterian church in Fosterville, but the membership dwindled away. The Baptist church bought the property and built a nice brick building. The late Guy Jordan wrote the following article about the Fosterville Baptist Church⁵⁵ :

"Fosterville Baptist Church was organized in 1905 by Baptists who believed in world missions and became known as Missionary Baptists. This group was a "spin-off" of a revival meeting held at old Hickory Grove about half-way between Fosterville and Christiana. Preaching services were first held at the Presbyterian Church in Fosterville by a former missionary to China during which a number of people were baptized, and others came by letter.

Soon, a building lot was bought, and through the efforts of F. B. Williams and others, a modern church building was constructed. it stood from 1905 until 1934 when a new brick building was built on the old Presbyterian lot. It was used until 1954 when it was changed into a pastorium. The church group then bought the present building and remodeled it from a school building to one suitable for a church."

One of the first members of the Fosterville Church of Christ was Archibald Lingow who became a Christian in Nashville in 1851. Two years later, he moved to Fosterville and worshiped in his home located behind the old Fosterville school. After his death in 1859, his wife, Martha, was baptized by O. B. Ferguson. James A. Elam, her son-in-law, was baptized by Tolbert Fanning at the Crossroads congregation. His son, E. A. Elam, became a well-known and highly respected preacher among churches of Christ. He served as Editor of the Gospel Advocate for a number of years and also as President of David Lipscomb College. He preached the first sermon in the new Fosterville church building in September, 1886.

Shortly after the Civil War, Mr. William Gilmore gave one acre of land for the site of the "Old Union Church" building. The trustees were Thomas Edwards, J. A. Elam, and S. G. Miller. The deed stipulated that the land be used for the use and benefit of (the white race only) the Southern Episcopal Methodist, Cumberland Presbyterian, Primitive Baptist, and Christian churches. Each was assigned a Sunday of the month. Nothing was indicated about the use of the building on fifth Sundays.

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The church began meeting in the Old Union building in 1867. After this building burned in 1886, the Christians were deeded some land by Mr. Harb Gilmore for a church to be built next to where the "Old Union" building had stood. In 1900, the name of the church was changed from "Christian Church" to "Church of Christ". By 1906, there was a complete separation of the churches of Christ and the Christian church.

Some of the early members of the Christian church, according to the research done by Joey Woodruff, were: Jim Todd, Sam McElroy, Billy Bingham, George Horton, Harriet Horton, Mack Horton, Aaron Williams, Chuck Powell, Mrs. Elam (mother of E. A. Elam), Harb Gilmore, Marth Gilmore, and Mrs. Eudora "Dolie" Edwards. Some of their descendants still live in the area.

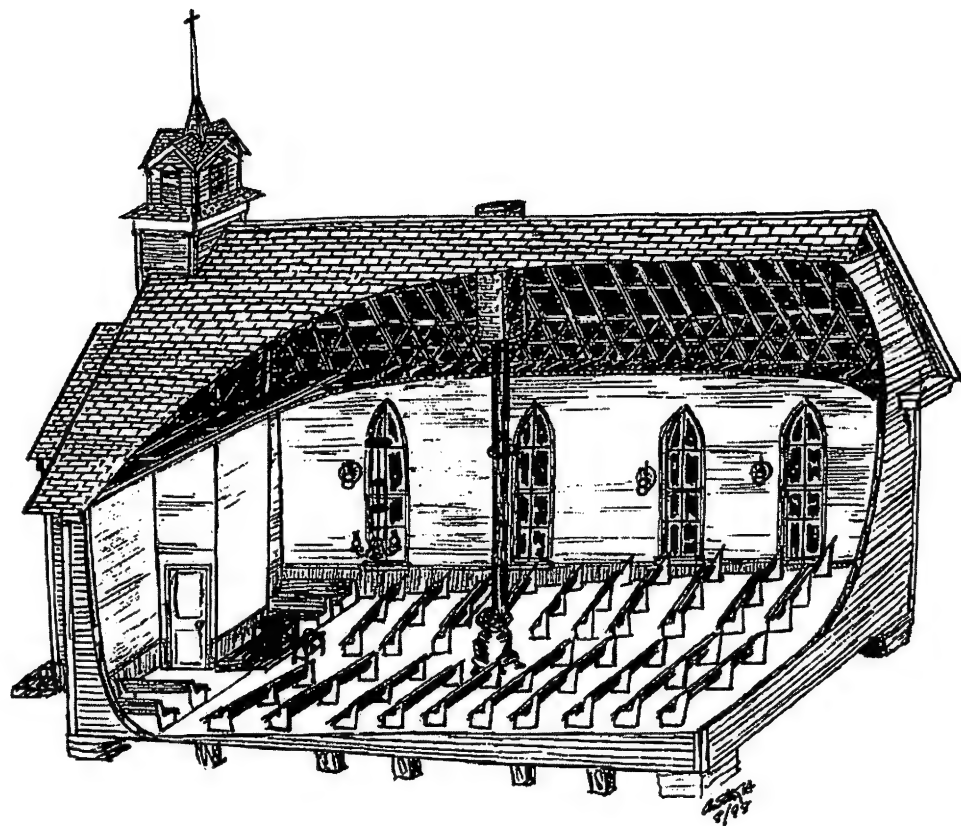
The story is told that, one Sunday morning, Brother Calaway Todd was late for services. He noticed, as he neared the building, that the roof was on fire. He came in and calmly announced that the house was on fire and suggested that they leave in an orderly fashion. Some of the men found a ladder and went up on the roof and began tearing away the burning cedar shingles. Others were bringing milk cans of water from nearby Bailey's Creek. It is said that some of the women and children, not sure of the outcome, began carrying out pews and other furniture. Sisters Carrie Kerr and Esther Powell were seen tearing the stand from the pulpit and taking it to safety. They soon had the fire under control. My friend, Carol Ellis, used to preach a sermon, *"The Funniest Things Happen at Church"*. This certainly was not funny at the time, but this shows you that you never know what will happen at church! Expect the unexpected.

Mammy was a long-time member of the Fosterville church of Christ. As a young lady, she took her younger siblings to an "old time" Calvinistic Baptist church near Millersburg. The worship was highly emotional. Revival preachers called people to the mourner's bench to pray for the Holy Spirit. They would then shout and dance, and some would even faint. She said that she wanted, more than anything else, what they claimed to have, but she was honest. She prayed for it, but could not receive it. She finally decided that there was nothing to it and frankly stated her belief, as long as she lived, that those denominations were only emotional reactions.

Rarely did my grandmother miss a service. I am sure that she walked many times when she had no other way to go. Uncle Wallis and Aunt Ethel would usually pick her and my mother up in their buggy and later in their car. After we got our car, she was always ready to go. She never wanted anyone to have to wait on her. She was always ready on time. I saw her at church shortly before her death, when she was so weak she could hardly stand up. She was skin and bones and yellow with Jaundice. It would have been so easy for her to have used that as an excuse and stayed at home in bed. But she didn't. She took her religion seriously. She wanted to be in the "House of the Lord" on the Lord's Day. That dedication surely had a profound influence upon my life as a child of God.

Cross-sectional diagram of interior building, including auditorium, roof, and attic space. Note structural design of roof, including rafters and supports, brick flue, and elevated floor of auditorium.

Diagram sketch by
Anthony
Hendricks⁵⁶



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My parents loved the church. It was important to them. There was never a question about whether or not they would go to church on a Sunday. We just assumed that we would all attend unless, of course, there was sickness or some other emergency. We used the term "providently hindered". On Saturday afternoon, my mother would lay out our "Sunday-go-to-meetin' clothes" and polish our one pair of shoes. On Sunday morning, she and my grandmother would start Sunday dinner soon after breakfast to receive the finishing touches after we got back home from church. We didn't know what "eating out" was in those days unless it was out in the yard, like a picnic.

My mother taught a Sunday School class for years. She was a dedicated teacher, sacrificing time and effort, which was greatly appreciated by most of her students and parents, as well as other members of the church. She started by having a Saturday afternoon Bible class for the neighborhood children at our home. Joey Woodruff was one of her students. After her death, he wrote the following tribute:

"Miss Estelle strove to convert every child she ever came in contact with. She was successful with many in bringing them to Christ and even those whom did not become Christians were influenced by her. She is responsible for several boys becoming either part-time or full-time preachers and many young ladies becoming excellent wives, mothers, and teachers. Her knowledge and love of the Bible was passed on to all that came in contact with her, even those who only shared a small moment of time with her in Vacation Bible School at Green Meadows or Fosterville. Her work on the bulletin allowed many across the county to keep up with our work at Fosterville and the individuals who comprised the church here. She enjoyed correspondence courses and spent many long hours responding to pupils in foreign lands of which many are converted. She will long be remembered for her life she lived as a Christian."

My dad led singing for many years. Brother Wesley Flowers encouraged him to start. Brother Flowers was a good singer himself, and I recall that he would usually sit in front of us in the "amen corner" with his head turned to listen to Daddy's singing. Dad took his assignment seriously. On Sunday mornings, he would get dressed before anyone else did and go out to the car and pick out his songs and practice them. Although he didn't know the shape-notes, he had a good ear for music, and I never knew him to get up before the audience and make a mistake in tune or pitch.

At church, it was always hot in the summer and cold in the winter. In the early days, the church building was heated by a warm morning stove. Before every service, Brother Fount or Brother Henry Bingham or someone else had to go early to build a

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fire and get the building warm. In the summertime, the large arched windows were opened and the people made use of the colorful cardboard advertising fans given by Woodfin and Moore Funeral Home. This was, of course, an invitation to all the bugs in the neighborhood, too, and I guarantee that every preacher who ever preached from that pulpit at night ate his share of them! Four electric fans were bought later on and placed high on the walls so that the air could be circulated fairly well. Air conditioning came much later.

Before electricity came to our community, the building was lighted by coal-oil lamps with reflectors. At one time, I am told, there was a beautiful ornate coal-oil chandelier which hung in the center of the room.

This Old Pool of Mine

On our little farm, there was a large stock pool of water fed by a nearby spring. It was used as a baptistery by both the Baptists and the church of Christ. Before time for the "big meetings" to start in the summer, it was my job to get the pool cleaned. I would know out the plug at the bottom of the pool to drain out the stale water. Water that remained was dipped out with a bucket. The settlements had to be shoveled out with a scoop. Several inches would accumulate in a year's time. Then, I would actually scrub down the rock bottom and the inside concrete walls. After all this was done, I put the wooden plug back in place and let the pool fill up with fresh water. It always looked nice, for the water was clean and clear, and one could see all the way to the bottom. I think the cows enjoyed it, too!

Baptisms in the big old pool were always impressive. Usually, baptisms would be during a Gospel Meeting or Revival at night under a canopy of stars. Cars would be driven up close on a large unbroken rock bluff protruding from the hillside, and the headlights were turned on. A crown from church would gather and sing appropriate songs such as *"Happy Day"*. Another invitation would usually be extended by the preacher, and the song leader would lead, *"Oh, Why Not Tonight?"* Often, one or more who had been considering obeying the gospel would wait and make up their minds at the pool. The candidates for baptism would change clothing in our house. The preacher would then take their confession if he had not done so at the church building. He would ask them the simple question: "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God?" After they so indicated, he would lead them down the stone steps into the water and baptize each one in turn, saying: "Upon the confession of your faith in Jesus Christ as God's only begotten Son, I now baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Spirit)."

My great grandfather, Squire Dallas Powell, was baptized in this pool that he had built in 1912. He was an old man, and the story is told that, because he was such a large man and perhaps somewhat feeble with age, he had to sit in a chair to be



Church time — Mom and Dad in their Sunday best

baptized. My mother and father were baptized in this pool. At the age of twelve, I was also baptized there. Even after all these years, I still have people, from time to time, to ask me about the old pool and tell me that they were baptized in it. It became sort of a landmark. It also served as the community swimming pool for the kids. The thick concrete walls still stand, but it has become old and cracked and does not hold water anymore. It is a relic of a generation past, for most churches anymore have built-in, heated baptisteries. It no longer holds water, but it is brimming full of cherished memories.

Preacher Boy

While growing up, I considered what I would do for a living as an adult. There were a lot of things that I think I would have been good at and would have enjoyed, like becoming a builder and developer or teacher. But I chose preaching because I felt I *had* to. And I have never regretted that decision. To me, preaching is not just a "job" or a "profession", it is a *calling*.

I began preaching while still in High School at the age of sixteen. I preached my first sermon at the Fosterville Church of Christ. Many of my relatives on both sides of the family were there. My subject was *"The Ark and the Church"*. Mammy was beaming. She was proud of her grandson, a "boy preacher", and, of course, my parents were, also. Soon, I had appointments to preacher nearly every Sunday. I would borrow the family car, leave early Sunday morning, drive to my appointment, and stay over until after the Sunday evening services. One of those appointments was at the Mars Hill Church of Christ at Rucker. As the folks were leaving, they were giving me encouragement by telling me what a good job I had done and how much they liked my sermon. It almost gave me the bighead. But one old fellow quickly burst my balloon. Leaning on his cane at the doorway, he said, "Pretty good talk, young feller, but like all young preachers, you need a heap of improvement."

When I got home from a preaching appointment, my parents were usually already in bed because they were early risers. But Mammy was always awake. I would have to go through her bedroom to reach my own room, and from the darkness she would ask: "How many baptisms did you have today?" The next day, my dad would usually ask, "How much did they pay you?"

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Old Time Religion

Just suppose it is visitor's day for friends and family at our country congregation sometime in the generation of the twenties through the forties, and you were there. What would you experience? Would it be unusual? Would you feel comfortable?

Folks went to church in those days, not for entertainment, but for worship. Oh, some people attended for social fulfillment, but the worship service was designed with one purpose in mind - worshiping God in the way He wants mankind to worship Him, "in spirit and in truth." You would find that the worship service consisted of five acts: Singing, praying, the Lord's Supper or communion, giving, and preaching. All are authorized in God's word.

So, let us, in your imagination, enter into the white frame building and find a seat. After a period of greeting and visiting with neighbors, the song service begins. Brother Kerr stands up in front of the audience and announces the number of the song to be sung in the songbook. He begins the song and all the parts join in: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. The singing is a cappella, and everyone may participate. There is no instrumental music. That may seem strange to some visitors. It is explained that there was none used in the New Testament, and there is no biblical authority for its use. Instrumental music was not introduced until hundreds of years after Christ. Neither was it used in the worship of the synagogue after which the worship of the early church was patterned.

The worship service begins with singing. The number of songs is optional, but usually there are three or four. Then there is a prayer led by one of the men. It is a prayer of petition and thanksgiving coming from the heart and ending with several "amens" within the congregation.

I once attended a service where the song leader announced his song and then said, "after which, Brother so-and-so will lead us in prayer." The man called upon happened to not be present. There was a young fellow there whose name was very similar to the name that had been called upon. At the end of the song, everybody bowed their heads. The young fellow looked around nervously. Then he spoke up and said, "If you folks are waiting on me to pray, you've got a long wait coming!"

The order of worship is not stipulated in the New Testament. Sometimes the Lord's Supper or communion is served before the sermon and sometimes after. It makes no difference. The Lord's Supper is weekly, on each Lord's Day (Sunday), because this is when it was always observed in the early church. The New Testament specifies two items: The unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine (wine or grape juice). We learn that the unleavened bread represents the body of Jesus and the fruit of the vine His blood. Hence, there is a commemoration of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ every week on each Lord's Day, not just once or twice per year.

The fruit of the vine is served in two goblets that were passed from one to the

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other, but later replaced by a communion set of small individual glasses. We understand that this made no difference because it is not the container but the contents that is important.

The fruit of the vine that the Bible calls for is unfermented grape juice. This being in the twenties or thirties, it was prepared by someone in the congregation who had grape vines. The unleavened bread is baked by one of the ladies. To be unleavened, it has to be baked without yeast. It is brought each Sunday before services and placed on a table in the front of the auditorium and covered with a sparkling-white table cloth. Those who prepared the Lord's Supper each Sunday had a necessary and responsible duty.

The contribution is taken up after the Lord's Supper is served. This is not to be considered a part of the communion. It is done in this order only because of the convenience of the men who are serving. It is during the Great Depression, and money is scarce and contributions are usually very small. Usually, there is barely enough to cover basic expenses without individuals chipping in to make up the difference which is sometimes necessary. In many rural congregations, there is not enough money to have a regular preacher every Sunday, and even then, he is usually paid not only what was in the contribution that Sunday, but also with fresh meat and garden vegetables. Brother Wesley Flowers had a large family and was once paid with two pigs that he brought home in the back of his car. But most congregations managed to survive.

When our congregation did not have preaching on Sunday, there would be the reading of the scriptures, perhaps a short talk by one of the elders or one of the young men of the congregation. Often, Uncle Raz Edwards would read a timely article from the *Gospel Advocate*. Sometimes, it would be an article written by his uncle, E. A. Elam. I had even heard of congregations tuning in to a gospel sermon on the radio and listening to it during the worship period.

On this special Sunday, the preacher extends an invitation at the end of his sermon to anyone who wishes to become a Christian or to anyone else who feels the need to respond for any reason. Tears of joy are shed when a precious soul does respond to the gospel call. At the baptism, it is pointed out that we had seen the re-enactment of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

This is what I consider the "old time religion". I decided a long time ago that if it was good enough for Peter and Paul, it was good enough for me.

We learn also that the Sunday School is important but that it is not a part of the worship. It meets usually an hour before the worship service begins and is attended not only by the children but most of the adult members. It meets at this time because of the convenience. Some congregations have classrooms, but this one does not. There are classes for different ages meeting in different parts of the auditorium. It is sometimes hard to concentrate with all the talking going on at the same time, but everyone seemed to get used to it and much good teaching is accomplished. The little

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folk have picture cards with a memory verse and a Bible story on the back. Some of the adults use the *Gospel Advocate Quarterly*. Other adult classes choose to study the Bible verse by verse with comments and questions by both men and women.

There is the supposedly-true story of a preacher's son who was in the kindergarten class. They had their Bible lesson and a coloring session. Now they were singing some children's songs. The teacher asked the class what they would like to sing. The preacher's son raised his hand and said, "Let's sing 'Pistol Packin' Momma!'" (Don't get it? That was a popular country song at that time.)

Much of my early learning came through the Sunday Bible School. There were no frills, and the classrooms were sparse and plain-primitive by some standards. But there was good, sound teaching by men and women who were dedicated to God's word. To them, as well as my parents and grandmother, do I owe my gratitude for becoming well-grounded in the truth at an early age. The Sunday School is an important part of the Lord's work. As Ira North used to preach, most baptisms and church growth comes through the Sunday School. It is important.

Eyes on Far-Away Places

The folks of Fosterville and the Soapstone area have always been interested in far-away places and have always generously supported missions throughout the world. Characteristically, they possess concern for the less fortunate, not only for their own people, but for the well-being of distant dwellers far beyond the horizon, both physically and spiritually. They have always been quick to respond to any legitimate plea for help or an emergency.

The Baptist church in Fosterville is a *missionary* Baptist church. This means that they believe in and support Baptist-sponsored missions at home and abroad.

The Church of Christ in Fosterville has always been mission-minded. Even during the Great Depression and World War II, few, if any, missionaries seeking funds were turned away empty-handed. As a lad, I recall brother Barney Moorehead of Nashville showing up unannounced on a Sunday morning requesting funds for missions in Japan. He would be given a few dollars, maybe that Sunday's collection. Also, he sold a few books from his World Vision bookstore to help him with his expenses. The church assisted Otis Gatewood with his mission efforts in Germany right after the end of the war. And, there were many others.

The Fosterville church has had a hand in the establishment of a number of other congregations. One was the Green Meadow Church of Christ, a black congregation. My parents were very much interested in assisting that church in every way they could. It has grown to become a strong church.

Without asking for assistance from the congregation, some of the members of the church at Fosterville started a Church of Christ in Toledo, Ohio. It was during the great migration of southerners to the North in the twenties and thirties. Will and

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Hattie (Epps) Fulton moved to Toledo to find work in the automobile industry. Will was an uncle of the former mayor of Nashville, Richard Fulton. They were also the grandparents of Don Powell. When they arrived in the big city, far from home, the first thing they did was to start looking for a Church of Christ but found none. There was not a single congregation in that entire city. If there was, they never found it. "Miss" Hattie was determined to do something about it. She took the lead assisted by her husband, Will. They contacted everybody they knew and began advertising worship services in the newspaper that were to be held in their home. Among those present for the first worship service were Mack and Vic Horton, (parents of Hattie Brothers, wife of Fount) Uncle Wallis Powell, and Charlie and Bell Burris of the Fosterville community. From that small beginning, the church in Toledo flourished.



Mom's Saturday Bible class

CHAPTER XVI

GREAT PREACHING IN THE GREATEST GENERATION

*"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring
glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:15 NIV)*

An old preacher once advised me: "Son, don't preach unless you *have to*." I knew what he meant. I believed that was the reason he was a preacher, and that's the only reason I wanted to preach. I didn't go into preaching because I thought it was easier. Preaching isn't easy! It's hard work. Just ask any dedicated preacher. I didn't preach for the money because one doesn't get rich preaching, especially in those days. Many of the preachers I knew had to supplement their income doing something else. Some great preachers lived at or below the poverty level. Neither did I preach for the glory for there is not much of that in preaching. I preached because I *had to preach*.

I began preaching on the first Sunday of 1948 at the age of 16. It was not long before I was preaching somewhere nearly every Sunday. One of my encouragers was Brother Will Ely of Unionville. The church at Unionville hired me to preach on Sunday per month. Brother Ely always had encouraging words for me and helped me to get other appointments. One day, he came across a friend on the street in Shelbyville who was a member of the church at New Hermon. He told Brother Ely of their need for a preacher, and Brother Ely recommended me. The man had his doubts. "I don't think he will do for he is too young," he replied. Brother Ely said, "Just try him once and then decide." They did, and I stayed on through my college years and have been back numerous times for meetings. One of the former members, who was a young girl at the time, recently wrote a reminiscing letter of those bygone days and said that they were all so proud of me when I, as "their" teenage preacher, conducted some tent meetings at Mt. Hermon that resulted in the establishment of a congregation in that community.

Willard Collins, past President of David Lipscomb University, whose introduction is at the beginning of this volume, has always been an encouragement to my ministry. To a class of young preachers, he recommended specialization, as, for example, in the medical field. One may specialize in pulpit preaching, another in youth ministry, someone else in missionary work. I chose radio evangelism. He liked that. He once stood in the pulpit of the church at Fosterville and said something like this: "Just think, a boy who roamed all over these hills grew up to be heard by millions all over the world." I do not claim any credit, however. I owe what I am today to my Heavenly Father, first, and then to my parents and grandmother, to my teachers and to gospel preachers like Willard Collins who were all a part of that

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"Greatest Generation". What our young men and women in the military did for our country, these preachers of the gospel did for Christ and His Kingdom. They stood on the firing line and gave their lives to the cause that supercedes all other causes. It was through their tireless labor and sacrifice and fearless preaching that the churches of Christ became strong and numerous. Through their tireless efforts, the churches of Christ became, for a time, considered one of the fastest growing religious organizations in the United States. These soldiers of the cross worked independently. Oh yes, there were some disagreements, but they had many things in common.

- They had different styles of preaching, but most of them were well above average as public speakers. Some might even be called orators. They knew how to create and hold attention. They could get their points across most skillfully. Some of them were superb debaters.
- They knew the Bible and were noted for the "book, chapter, and verse" approach to preaching. They believed the Bible to be the inspired word of God, and that what they preached should be documented. Not all of them had been exposed to Greek or Hebrew. Some had never been to college. They were self-taught, spending much time studying the Bible itself and committing much of it to memory. One preacher could listen to someone randomly read verses of scripture and then he would quote the preceding and next verses or the entire chapter.
- They were dedicated to the cause of Christ, and many would have gladly laid down their lives for it. Some did. They preached the word with conviction, giving a "Thus saith the Lord". They were not perfect. They were human and made mistakes. But, the majority of them tried to live up to what they taught. As Theodore Roosevelt once said, "They only man who makes no mistakes is the man who never does anything." They had the attitude of the apostle Paul who wrote, "...for woe is me if I preach not the gospel." (I Cor. 9:16)

Some Great Preachers of the Past

N. B. Hardeman was one of the founders of Freed-Hardeman College in the small town of Henderson, Tennessee. He was a Walking Horse enthusiast and often attended the Walking Horse shows in Shelbyville. When in the area, he would usually preach for one of the nearby congregations. Some of the New Hermon folks remember him coming there to preach one Sunday, and when he got out of the car, he went over to a tree in the yard and cut off a small limb. He used it as an illustration in a lesson on "The Vine and the Branches".

Brother Hardeman was a superb speaker. He preached in five Tabernacle

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Meetings in Nashville. The first four were in the famous Ryman Auditorium, and the last one was in the War Memorial Building. The preaching was simple and down-to-earth, and the city of Nashville responded enthusiastically. Six to eight thousand attended each night, and thousands were turned away. Each service was broadcast over radio, and the sermons were published in full in the daily newspaper. This was not many years after the division with the Christian Church, which left the church of Christ in a depressed state numerically, but the Hardeman meetings did much to solidify and strengthen the congregations and to propel the church to a period of great growth. Within a few years, there were over one-hundred congregations just in Davidson County.

Young preachers used to study these Tabernacle sermons, which were published in five volumes. Some would even preach them from memory. The story is told of one young man, a student at Lipscomb, who went out to preach in a rural church with one of these sermons committed to memory. He was in the pulpit preaching to a few people with vigorous animation and booming voice, just as he imagined Hardeman would have preached it. He preached it *verbatim*, even referring to "all of you in the balcony" -- only, there wasn't a balcony!

C. M. Pullias was known as "the walking Bible". I heard him preach many times while growing up. He was noted mainly for his evangelistic work. Brother Pullias was self-educated, blessed with a powerful voice and, what I would call, a photographic memory. He could hold an audience spell-bound for a whole hour or even two. He memorized great portions of the Bible, if not nearly all of it. The claim was made, certainly not by him, that if the Bible were to be destroyed, he would be able to reconstruct it from memory. I don't know if that is true or not, but I have heard him quote dozens of scriptures, one after another, in sermons without ever opening a Bible. Sometimes, he would quote whole chapters. Those who followed him with their Bibles said that he never missed a word. He was a remarkable man. He was also a fabulous singer and often led singing. The story is told that, when plans were being made for the first Tabernacle meeting, two preachers were considered, N. B. Hardeman and C. M. Pullias. They decided on Brother Hardeman to preach and Brother Pullias to lead the singing. Brother Pullias was aware that he had been considered for the prime spot, but when they told him of the decision and asked him to direct the song service, his reply was: "I will do all that I can for the success of this gospel meeting, even to sweeping the floors."

Old preachers of that era had some unusual experiences and stories to tell. I recall an older preacher speaking at a chapel services at Lipscomb about his experiences as a traveling evangelist. He told of going into areas that were very poor and of places where he had to stay where bed bugs did bite and the food was hardly fit to eat. But he was effective and led many to the Lord. He told stories that were funny, but one story he told had the whole audience almost rolling in the aisles. He was in a gospel meeting, and several people had responded requesting baptism. They

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took them down to the creek to baptize them. The congregations assembled on the bank and the candidates were led down into the water, about waist deep, to be baptized. One was a big man and, as the preacher was positioning him in the water, he saw a water moccasin swimming toward them. Some boys had gone over to the opposite bank and scared the snake into the water. The preacher started dashing some water toward the snake to scare it away. The man was unable to see what was happening. He asked:

"What's going on, preacher?"

"Oh, nothing," said the preacher. "Just a little old water moccasin."

"Water moccasin, -----!" yelled the man. "What do you mean, '*just* a little old water moccasin'!"

He took off toward the bank, slinging water as he went. He climbed out and kept on going, wet clothes and all. The old preacher mused regretfully, "You know, I never did baptize that man!"

Marshall Keeble, a black preacher, was a frequent speaker on the Lipscomb campus and a student favorite. He always had stories to tell. He had an unusual graveled voice that he used effectively. Many preachers repeated his stories and homey illustrations, but no one was able to mimic his voice. He could hold the attention of an audience for hours at a time. It is reported that he personally baptized twenty to thirty thousand. He meant much to the cause of Christ, not only among his people, but to the white congregations, as well.

There was the story of a well-known Nashville preacher that made the rounds. He and his wife (we will call her Lucy) visited a congregation during a gospel meeting. He was called upon to lead the prayer. He was a large man, and, as was his custom, got out of his seat at the end of the pew and kneeled down in the aisle and began his prayer. Usually, his prayers were long-winded, and while he was thus engaged, the lights went out. It was totally dark. Finally, when he said his "Amen", he opened his eyes and exclaimed, out loud, "Oh, Lucy, I'm blind!"

Harris J. Dark was one of the first preachers I knew who had earned a Ph.D. It was in the field of mathematics which he earned while preaching for the Highland Park congregation in Richmond, Virginia. His higher education, however, did not go to his head or cause him to lose one ounce of faith. He acted cocky, but, in reality, he was a humble man. He never flaunted his doctorate. He was an excellent preacher of the gospel and a good Bible teacher. A student once questioned something that he had said, and Brother Dark replied, "Well, it's possible that I was mistaken. I have been wrong before -- *once*." I had him in Freshman Bible. My mother often reminded me of my coming home on weekends quoting something that Harris J. Dark had said.

W. B. West was Dean of Harding College Graduate School in Memphis. I first met Dr. West during my Senior year at Lipscomb when he came to recruit graduate students. He had taught with distinction at Pepperdine in California, but had left because of liberalism and came to Harding to start the Graduate School. But I

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declined because I was tired of schooling and planning on marriage and getting a job. However, a few years later, I did enroll and earned a Master's Degree. Brother West was a great help. He would have me write a paper on some subject and he would critique it. Sometimes, I would have to write it over several times before his approval. I would think it was perfect but he always found some fault in it. That was his job, of course. He would say, "Mr. Beasley, that is just not *scholarly*!" I would not tell him this, but I really didn't care if it was "scholarly" or not. I have never claimed to be a scholar. If it was something I really believed, I would say so with conviction. But to please Mr. West, I played the roll. And in doing so, I learned from him how to write and do research.

George W. DeHoff came to Murfreesboro and preached for many years for the old historic East Main congregation. He and his wife, Marie, founded DeHoff Publications which is still in business. He began preaching as a teenager in Arkansas. He was greatly admired for his knowledge of the Scriptures, his excellent preaching, and a superb debating ability. He was also an excellent writer, having published a number of books, including a commentary on the Bible. There are numerous stories that could be told about Brother DeHoff. One was told by my Aunt Sala Lamb who was a member at East Main and who had fed Brother DeHoff many times in her restaurant. She said that Brother DeHoff was holding a meeting at one of the rural congregations in the county, and she attended. His little boy was there, sitting on the front seat while his daddy was preaching. As he sat there, he began to fidget. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a firecracker. He reached into another pocket and pulled out a match. He then proceeded to try to strike the match to light the firecracker. His daddy observed what he was doing and came down out of the pulpit, snatched him up, gave him a couple of whacks on the behind, took the firecracker and match away from him, set him back down, and went back up into the pulpit. And, she said, "He never missed a word in his preaching." Many years later, I asked Brother DeHoff about it, but he just passed it off.

Estin Macon was the son of Uncle Dave Macon of Grand 'Ole Opry fame. Who would have ever dreamed that Uncle Dave would have been the father of a gospel preacher! It was not to his credit but to the credit of a godly mother. Estin was the exact opposite of his extroverted father. He never talked about his father, at least not to me. I wondered how well they got along.

Paul Matthews was a friend of mine. He told of moving to Columbia, Tennessee to preach for one of the big congregations. He was in the process of getting settled and he was unpacking as he had time. In one of the boxes, he had all of his sermon outlines dating back several years, some of which he planned to use in this new work. The janitor of the church saw the boxes of papers and mistook them for trash. What a shock it was to find that all that work had gone up in smoke. But he later said, "You know, that was one of the best things that ever happened to me. It made me continue studying."

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Claude Woodruff was also a favorite of mine. He held a number of meetings at the Fosterville church. One summer, it was hot and very dry. Folks were praying for rain to save their crops. The meeting was in progress. One hot and humid night, Brother Woodruff marched into the pulpit and opened up by talking about the severe drought. He observed that people said that dry weather was due to not paying the preacher. He paused for several seconds, and then added: "I sure hope it comes a gully washer!"

There are so many other preachers the I could write about, but space will not permit. Anyway, most of them are well-known throughout the brotherhood. They would include **Ira North, Batsell Barrett Baxter, Carroll Ellis, Thomas Whitfield**, and a host of others.

I have always felt that the part-time preachers have not received the gratitude that they deserve. Most of them have supported themselves and their families with some sort of job or profession while spending a lifetime preaching the gospel in an area where they live. Such was the beloved Brother **Clyde Gleaves** who preached for years at Fosterville and other nearby congregations while farming near Fairfield. In Winchester, Kentucky, there was **Taylor Lowery** who owned a dry cleaning business and preached for congregations in a wide area. There was also **R. A. Craig** who owned a real estate business in Shelbyville, Kentucky. He was responsible for establishing the church in Lawrenceburg and a number of others. He would get one to going well, find a preacher to work with it and then move on to start another. Money was not a consideration. There are others that I wish that I could mention. These men, however, would not mind because they did what they did for the love of God and mankind and not because of recognition or a desire for praise.

There is a story about an old preacher I used to know in southern Indiana. He was a bachelor who would never tell anybody his age. This made folks even more curious. They would try to squeeze it out of him or trick him into telling, but to no avail. Speculation abounded. He was in a meeting at a place and one of the nosey sisters was determined to get the information. She developed a plan of action and went to work. She invited him to dinner and prepared all the dishes she knew that he especially liked. It was an enjoyable meal with good company. That afternoon, as everyone was relaxing, she approached him with the troubling question.

"Brother so-and-so," she began, "several of us ladies have been wondering exactly how old you are. I said that you are ----- years old, but others tell me that I am wrong. I don't think I am. But can you please settle the matter for us, once and for all, and share with me your age? It is something I would really appreciate."

The old brother leaned over and softly replied, "Sister, can you keep a secret?"

Her heart must have skipped a beat or two with excitement as she assured him, "Oh, I surely can! I'll never tell a soul!"

But her feathers dropped when he simply replied, "So can I!"

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Old Preachers Fade Away

It amazes me how quickly old preachers are shelved and forgotten. It would seem that congregations could profit from their vast experience and wisdom. But usually that is not the case. There used to be a well-known preacher in the brotherhood who was in great demand for gospel meetings, lectures, and speaking appointments. His name I will not reveal, but was almost a household word. I quit hearing anything about him until, somehow, I found his telephone number and gave him a call. I was shocked at the sound of his voice. I could tell that he had aged considerably. He was almost frantic as he explained his situation. Here was a man who used to preach to great audiences all over the country. Now he was preaching for small congregation in Texas and living in a house provided by the church. He and his wife had just returned from a trip and were greeted with the news that he was fired. Actually, he was asked to resign, but that's the same thing. He had no place to go. Old preachers are not much in demand. He had no home. Soon, he would have no salary and no retirement. I doubt that he even had Social Security. What was he to do? Actually, I think this is a black mark against the church. Things like this should never happen. We should have more love and respect for our preaching brethren who have unselfishly given their lives for the cause of Christ than just to turn them out into the cold when they become too old or too sick to continue their work. It reminds me somewhat of the old American Indian practice of abandoning too old or too sick people and just letting them die. Many church leaders exercise good judgment and common sense in running their businesses, but not when it comes to the Lord's business. Common sense may be thought of as wisdom. God has promised wisdom if we ask Him for it (James 1:5). And we should ask for God's wisdom in dealing with old preachers. They have so much to continue to offer. Don't let them just fade away and be forgotten.

Generally speaking, congregations pay preachers better now than they did when I was young. But some still are stingy and take advantage of inexperienced young preachers, paying as little as they can get by with. This is wrong, and it doesn't take the wisdom of Solomon to know that it is bad business. To get the best from a preacher, like any employee, he needs to be treated fairly and know that he is appreciated. It's not economical to change preachers every year or two. Also, it takes a preacher at least four or five years to really get to know the congregation and do his best work. A preacher friend of mine once went to a congregation to "try out". In an interview by the church leaders that afternoon, when the subject of salary came up, one of them said, "We expect our preacher to *sacrifice*." My friend got up out of his seat, went over to the chalk board and took a piece of chalk and wrote, "I am willing to sacrifice" and signed his name. He then offered the chalk to them and said, "I am willing to sign this pledge. Are you?"

I do not claim to have the wisdom of Solomon, but I have developed a small

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amount of common sense, much of it coming from growing up around Soapstone during the Greatest Generation. There are some things about preaching and preachers that I have come to believe strongly:

First, a preacher should never depend entirely upon preaching for a living.

The Jews used to have a saying to the effect that if a father did not teach his son a trade, he taught him to steal. I believe that every preacher should prepare himself to do something else besides preach. He may need to fall back on it someday. Also, it will give him and his family a better sense of security. David Lipscomb, founder of David Lipscomb University, believed this and taught it. I have trained myself to do several things. I prepared to become a teacher in college, and I have done some teaching at Madison Academy in Huntsville, Alabama and Gupton College in Nashville. After graduation, I was to become a principle of a school in Rutherford County, but decided to preach full-time instead. While in Indiana, I studied Real Estate and obtained a broker's license. I also obtained an auctioneer's license while living there. This was done as a step forward in reaching my goal of expanding Restoration Radio Network which I had started. I knew that I would be unable to raise the necessary funds if I were tied down with local work. So, Jeanette and I decided that I would resign local work and for me to go into Real Estate. This would leave me the freedom of taking off and making fundraising trips on weekends. It was hard, but the plan worked well, and when sufficient ongoing support was raised, I quit Real Estate to devote full-time to my calling, radio evangelism. I could have gone on in Real Estate and made a good living at it, but I chose my first love, preaching the gospel worldwide. God has blessed that decision.

Second, I believe that a preacher should be paid well and live in his own home. When I first started preaching, generally speaking, preachers were not well-paid and were usually expected to live in a preacher's home which most everyone in the congregation felt like they owned. It was considered a part of the minister's salary, and when he moved on, there was nothing for him to take with him. In reality, the preacher was helping to purchase a home for the church to own. My first full-time preaching was at the old Water Street congregation in Lewisburg, Tennessee which paid a whopping \$75 per week! There were no benefits. Not even a paid vacation. We even moved ourselves. I was too green to know that this should have been the responsibility of my employer. But we were blessed, nevertheless. We had a house in Murfreesboro that was bringing in some extra income, and we were able to rent some fairly nice places. We later sold the house and bought a new one. I laid awake at night, though, wondering how I was going to make the monthly payments of \$65! Like most preachers, we moved several times, but in each instance, we were able to buy and upgrade our own home. I believe a congregation should allow a preacher to do this and compensate him so that he will be able to do so. There are even cases in which a congregation may loan the preacher a down payment to be paid back on a time payment plan or when the house is sold when the preacher moves away. Such an

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agreement would be beneficial to the congregation in that they will not have a large amount of money tied up in a house and do not have the responsibility of upkeep. It will be beneficial to the preacher because he will be able to build up equity and go a long way to owning his own home, free and clear, upon retirement. Also, his family will feel more secure and happy. It is a *win/win* situation.

Third, preachers are entitled to a generous retirement plan. This is something that almost everyone in the business world takes for granted. When I began preaching, preachers were considered self-employed. But the IRS changed all of that. A preacher is now an employee of the church. Like any other employee, a preacher should have, in addition to his salary, other benefits, including a retirement plan. Some preachers are allowed to opt out of Social Security, but this, in my judgment, is a grave mistake. This is one thing that my dad insisted upon when preachers were allowed to start paying in to Social Security back in the '50s, and I am glad that he did.

But Social Security alone is not enough. In addition, there needs to be some sort of retirement income. Some may think that they will save and invest enough over the years to retire on, but usually that doesn't happen. They are going to get old, if they live long enough, and churches need to think enough of their ministers to help them prepare for it. I know of preachers who woke up one morning to realize that they had become old and were no longer in demand. They had no home, no savings, and sometimes not even Social Security which was designed only to *supplement* retirement. Churches can and should keep this from happening. It's just a matter of common sense!

CHAPTER XVII

SOAPSTONE UNIVERSITY

"An unusual amount of common sense is sometimes called wisdom" - Selected

Alan Bryan is the author of *Climb Happiness Hill*. In it, he offers many practical suggestions that are necessary in bring about happiness. But it takes effort. It must be worked at. Sometimes it is exhausting. Alan thought of it as being like climbing up a steep hill. I agree. It's like climbing up to the top of Soapstone Hill.

For me, some of the most important lessons in life were not taught in the school room. Not even in college or graduate school. They were learned elsewhere, like climbing up Soapstone Hill. I am thankful for those years. My experiences there, sometimes in quiet solitude, have proved to be of great value. Here are some of the lessons I have learned:

First, I learned the real meaning of success. I learned that "Success is a journey, not a destination" --a quote from Jim Sweetland. When thinking of success, most people think of material success only. They think of success as living in a big house, driving a luxury automobile, and having a large line of credit. But, being well-off financially is not the only kind of success. Nor is it the most important. Jesus talked about a successful failure. Everyone considered him a wonderful success, but God called him a "fool". He failed because of covetousness (Lk. 12:16-21). Some may use their wealth wisely. They are masters of their possessions, but others allow their wealth to rule them.

There are other kinds of success which are more important than accumulating wealth. Some are meaningful service to their fellow man. In fact, some of the most successful people I have ever known had little of this world's goods. As an anonymous poet wrote: "(T)rue success to any man is to die in Christ and live again."

The problem is that most people do not know the meaning of success. What is it, anyway? How would you define success? Success is, in reality, *the progressive realization of certain personal goals*. They are goals that fit into our own values, standards, and desires. It does not drop out of the sky. It is not a bolt out of the blue. It is not a flash of lightning coming suddenly and unexpectedly. It comes progressively. It comes a little at a time. It is the progressive realization of the goals that we have in life. Cecil B. DeMille describes success this way: "The person who makes a success of living is the one who sees his goal steadily and aims for it unswervingly. That is dedication."

There are two classifications of success - worldly success and spiritual success. We are interested in both. There is nothing wrong with worldly success. Many of

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God's people such as Abraham and Job enjoyed worldly success. But each would have told you and me that spiritual success is far more important than worldly success. Abraham was not content with what worldly treasures he had accumulated but "looked for a city...whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). His primary goal was spiritual and the achievement came about progressively. God wants each of us to be spiritually successful. I believe that he wants each one of us to "lay up treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:20) and look to heaven as our ultimate goal in life. That's the reason that God sent His son to die on the cross for each one of us. And, that is the reason that he has given us the Bible to live by. In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, God paints a beautiful picture of what heaven is like. This is revealed to us to create in our hearts a real desire to go there. To reach our goal, there must be desire. There is a vast difference between a burning, sincere desire and a mere wish. Wishful thinking about heaven is not enough. A wish is passive and has no substance. Desire, on the other hand, involves action. Without desire strong enough to produce action, you cannot achieve your goal. "Action," said Pablo Picasso, "is the foundational key to all success." The Bible was written in such a way as to produce that strong desire to succeed spiritually.

Second, I learned the value of having worthy goals. Without having a goal, I would have never reached the top of Soapstone. That was not my goal in life, but it was a starting point. One can and should have goals in every area of life - physical, material, social, and moral. They should be kept in a place where you can see them and be reminded of them every day.

Third, I learned that self-evaluation is necessary in reaching our goals. My parents were wise in teaching me this lesson. Climbing up Soapstone, one should first stop and ask, "Am I up to it? Do I have what it takes to succeed all the way to the top?" Certainly, one should be aware of both his strengths and limitations. The Bible teaches us to examine ourselves (I Cor. 11:28; II Cor. 13:5). We should examine our inner being just as we do our outer being. But this takes courage. It always takes courage to face ourselves, to see ourselves as we really are. But it is necessary. It is just as necessary for us to know where we are now as it is for us know where we are going. If we don't know where we are now, it is highly unlikely that we will find our way to our desired destination. This is true in life, and it is true in our spiritual journey. The Bible helps us to make this self-evaluation. In whatever area of life, determine where you are now so that you will know where to start and what direction to take.

Fourth, I learned the importance of developing a plan of action. Joe Hopper, a friend of mine, was invited by a church group to go with them to the top of Soapstone. He declined because of a physical problem, but when the group got to the top, to their surprise, there he was waiting for them! First, my friend did some self-evaluation and concluded that he could not stand the climb up the steep hill. Second, he had a strong desire to go and be with them, and third, he developed a plan of

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action to get there. He borrowed an ATV and rode up to the top of the hill!

A goal without a plan of action is no good. You need to know where you are going and how to get there. There are some steps to take. There are "baby steps" first, but as time goes on and you become more mature and experienced, the steps will become larger. Write it down and set a deadline for the achievement of each step toward your primary objective. Oh, yes, there will be plenty of obstacles in the way. Satan will see to that, and so you need to figure this into your overall plan. It may be personal, environmental, or conflicts. We all hope for smooth sailing through life, but such would be most unusual. There are unexpected storms to contend with. It is difficult to foresee what all these problems will be or when they will occur, but we can anticipate many of them and determine a plan of action when they do occur. Listen to Henry Ford: "Most people spend more time and energy going around problems than trying to solve them."

Fifth, I learned the need for a burning desire to reach my goal. I reached the top of Soapstone because I had the desire to do so. This is what distinguishes between a real goal and a mere wish. You may sit around wishing for a million dollars, but more than likely, that will not happen. A wish has no substance. Desire, on the other hand, produces action. You have a choice. You can make it happen. My grandmother was a wise old lady. She used to tell me repeatedly, "Son, you can do anything you want to do." The emphasis was upon the word "*want*". I could sit around all day daydreaming, but how much did I want to achieve my desires? Did I have a goal? Did I have a burning desire to succeed? Was I willing to pay the price and use my full potential to achieve my goals in life? Walt Disney once gave this advice: "The way to get started is to quit talking and start doing."

Sixth, I learned to pray. One of my earliest memories is that of hearing my grandmother praying in her darkened room before retiring at night. She would kneel down by her bed, almost childlike, and pray earnestly. I could not hear what she was saying, but I knew that she was talking to God. She successfully reared eight children, and I am sure that she could not have done it without prayer.

You and I need to realize that we cannot go it alone. We need help from our friends and family. But, most of all, we need the help that only God can give. Solomon was one of the most successful people who had ever lived. Later on in his life, he failed because he left God out of his life. But at the first, he prayed for wisdom in leading his people and God answered that prayer (1 Kings 3:5ff). James reminds us that if we lack wisdom to ask of God (James 1:5). He goes on to tell us that we often go without and do not have the blessings that are available from God just because we forget to pray or we ask amiss or selfishly (James 4:2, 3).

Seventh, I learned to expect success. When I left home to climb up to the top of Soapstone, I expected to succeed. Failure never crossed my mind. I never doubted for one moment that I would reach the top. Many, I am convinced, fail because they start out expecting to fail. They fail in marriage or in business because they expected

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to fail. It is like self-fulfilled prophecy. Others, however, succeed in life because they expect to succeed. Success does not come in a brightly wrapped surprise package. The most successful people I have ever known were those who expected to succeed. They were winners because they used their creative abilities. They had goals in mind and they knew how they were going to achieve each one of them. Oh, they had setbacks. They experienced deep disappointments. But they learned from their experiences, both good and bad, and pushed on ahead. They never gave up. They thought "success". They acted successful. They walked with confidence. They were self-motivated. Solomon wrote: "As a man thinking in his heart so is he." Marcus Aelius, the Roman Emperor, observed: "A man's life is what his thoughts make of it."

The Old Testament character Caleb is an excellent example of how to be successful. He was one of the twelve who were sent into Canaan as spies. All of them brought back an evil report except for Caleb and Joshua. They were fearful because of giants in the land and great walled cities that seemed to reach into the sky. But Caleb and Joshua knew they could do it with God's help and urged the people to proceed immediately. But the people listened to the majority, and this resulted in their disobedience to God and being punished by having to wander in the wilderness for forty long years. Only Caleb and Joshua of that generation survived the journey.

Caleb was forty years old when this happened, but now let us go "fast-forward." Now he was 85, but he was not ready to lay down his weapons and retire. He said, "I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in" (Joshua 14:11). He requested Hebron for an inheritance, the very mountain where they had seen the giants and the walled cities. And, Caleb did what he knew was possible with God's help forty years before. He and his warriors drove out the inhabitants of the mountain and took the land. Caleb was a winner. He was a winner because his attitude was different from the ordinary. He did not think like the others. He didn't think of failure - only success. His attitude was: "With God's help, we can do it!" To become a winner, you may need to start by changing your attitude. You may have a pessimistic attitude like the then spies. You need to develop a positive attitude like Caleb who was willing to make a personal commitment and accept responsibility. He expected to succeed. He refused to give up. His goal was to conquer Hebron - and he did!

Here are some other characteristics of winners like Caleb:

1. Winners are always striving to reach a little higher.
2. Winners are always above the average.
3. The progress of winners is always forward. They never look back.
4. Winners always bounce back after failure.

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Winston Churchill was a winner. He was a very old man. He had led England through the dark days of World War II and other great difficulties. He had close ties with the United States and was loved and appreciated by people of both countries. Shortly before his death, he was invited to give a speech at a school where he had once attended as a student. Because of his failing health and old age, his family and advisors discouraged him from accepting the invitation. But he was determined to accept. He had to be assisted to the podium. His aids were apprehensive. Churchill was feeble. He leaned heavily upon the podium and stood there for a while without saying a word. The audience waited quietly. You could almost hear a pin drop. Finally, Churchill spoke. Here is what he said: "Never give in. Never give in. Never. Never. NEVER!"

That was the entire text of his speech, but it may well have been one of his most memorable speeches. It had to do with the secret of his own success. He never gave up. He was determined. In pictures I saw of him during his prime, even his facial features showed determination. Chomping a cigar, he reminded me of a bull dog that would get a hold on something and refuse to let go. He was persistent.

There was a popular politician, as the story goes, who was running for office. In his speeches, he stressed his most important qualification. He said that he "always hoed to the end of the row". He meant, of course, that he never quit. He never gave up. He kept on going. That's what it takes to succeed. An old gentleman once told me that to get knocked down was not failure. "Failure," he said, "is to refuse to get up after getting knocked down!"

Persistence is an important trait of character. Many a campaign has been lost because of a lack of it. Many careers and marriages might have been saved had there been more of it. Many good works have gone down the drain and forgotten because of a failure to persevere.

The well-known motivational speaker, Zig Zigler, authored the book *See You at the Top*. Reaching the top would be a worthy goal of us all.

Building Success

One of the best educational experiences I received was my first summer vacation from college. One weekend when I came home, Dad announced that we were going to build a house! Build a house! I was both surprised and delighted. He sat me down and outlined his plan. We were going to build a house in Murfreesboro and do most of the work ourselves. We were going to buy a surplus building at the old Army Classification Center in Nashville that was being dismantled for the materials, and we were going to start construction when I got out of college for the summer. We then got busy. I began drawing up the plans. It was to be a modest home with three bedrooms and a bath. We went to Murfreesboro and found a nice lot in a new subdivision on Peach Tree Street and bought it for \$700. Dad bought the

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building that had served as a barracks for about \$500. We had a dead line in taking it down and cleaning the area where it stood. Dad worked on it after work in the afternoons, and I helped out on Saturdays. Soon, we had the building dismantled and found that we had a lot of good lumber, but it was full of nails. We borrowed Uncle Wallis' truck and hauled it home to be stored in the Lynch Barn. In the afternoons, when he got home, Dad would go and pull nails and sort out the lumber. To show how frugal he was, he even straightened the nails and saved them to be used later!

In digging the foundation by hand, we ran into an old grave. I don't know if it was the site of an old forgotten early settler's grave, a slave cemetery, or an Indian grave. We didn't disturb it, but went on with construction. I guess those living there now would never guess that the house is partially built on an old grave.

Dad hired a carpenter to help us part-time, but most of the work we did ourselves. Dad worked in the afternoons after work and on Saturdays, but I worked every day in the summer. This was a great father/son experience, and it helped us to draw even closer. One day, a helper and I were putting on the roof shingles. When Dad got there in the afternoon, he took one look at what were doing and made us tear out part of it and do it over again. I hated the idea of redoing what we had already done, and there was some disagreement, but Dad was right, as always.

Building that house was one of the most valuable experiences I have ever had. I had always been interested in building things, and the aptitude test that I took in High School indicated that I might be successful as a builder or an architect. As a teenager, I had built a brooder house, an addition on our garage, enclosed the screened back porch, built some cabinets, replaced the posts of the fence around the yard, and other projects. Most of the work I did by myself. But this was my first experience in building a house from the ground up. This taught me how to achieve success, continuing to build upon it, a step at a time. Dad helped me to lay the foundation of building success.

I learned about construction first-hand; how a house is put together. It was also a wise investment. Dad and Mom had originally thought that they would live in the house, but after the death of my grandmother, they decided to buy the farm from the other heirs, and the house was given to me. This gave me a tremendous start in life. I rented the house while I was still in college, and Jeanette and I lived in it for a while after we married. Later, when we sold the house, we were able to buy our own home wherever we lived, building up equity all the time.

No More Hitch-Hiking

Growing up, it was not unusual to see plenty of hitch-hikers along the highway, and it was considered an act of kindness and neighborliness to stop and offer a ride. During the depression years, I often saw men "riding the rails", going to the big city to find work, no doubt.

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When I was a freshman, 1950-'51, we had one of the worst winters on record in this part of the country. It started off with an ice storm which is bad enough, breaking down tree limbs and utility wires and making driving hazardous. On top of the ice came several inches of snow. This was covered by a layer of ice. Then it snowed again, and there was another layer of ice. This happened about three or four times. The temperature hovered below freezing. Everything was shut down. There was little traffic moving. The city buses were not running. There was no heat in the dormitories. Classes were suspended. A classmate, Eddie Arnold and I, both from near Murfreesboro, decided to take advantage of a long weekend and head for home. The weather was not fit for man or beast. Youthful determination blinded whatever good judgment we might have had. We slipped and slid across campus to Granny White Pike and started thumbing for a ride into town. A doctor driving a car with a broken rear spring picked us up. When we got to the bus station, we learned that the bus service to Murfreesboro had been cancelled. We then trooped over to Union Station to catch the train. We bought tickets, boarded the train, found our seats, and waited - and waited some more. It was getting late, and the train never moved. It was frozen to the tracks! Refunded our tickets, we still had a problem. We were stuck uptown with no way to get back to school. Hardly any traffic was moving, but we decided to see if we could hitch a ride to Murfreesboro. Half frozen, we made our way down to Lafayette Street and started thumbing. Along came an old '38 Chevy driven by a student at Vanderbilt. He stopped and we piled in, grateful to get shelter from the arctic wind. We headed toward Murfreesboro over a solid sheet of ice on top of several inches of ice and snow. We couldn't see the highway, only guessing where it was. The fence posts on both sides of the roadway were covered in most places. Our driver, though, didn't seem overly concerned about the road conditions. He started out driving as fast as he usually would normally. Somewhere along about Smyran, he got into a race with another car. We were fairly flying at 70 or 80 miles an hour! If anything had gotten in the way, there would have been no way to have stopped. I was scared half to death! All I could do was hold on for dear life and pray! I promised my Lord that if I got out of that car alive, I would never again hitch a ride. And I have kept that promise!

Newspaper reports give warning of the dangers of hitch-hiking for both the driver of the vehicle and the one looking for a ride. But perhaps the most important lesson I learned from this frightening experience was that becoming an adult meant responsibility. I must take control of my own life. I must be in the driver's seat and make my own decisions. No one lives my life for me. I must answer to myself. No more free rides.

CHAPTER XVIII

GOD HAS BLESSED AMERICA

"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14:34)

Often we sang "God Bless America" at school and at basketball games and special events. Even during the Great Depression, my teachers taught us to be love our country. We were told over and over again how great our country is and how we should be proud to be Americans. We were taught by precept and example to pray for our great nation and for its leaders. We should continue to pray. Our country needs our prayers more than ever. We should pray that God will continue to bless America, especially during times of national crisis.

Has God blessed America? Oh yes, He has! More than we can tell. From the very beginning, He has blessed America. It has long been the envy of the rest of the world. It has emerged from a vast wilderness to become the richest and most powerful nation on the face of the earth. Her people stand tall, strong, and healthy. From "sea to shining sea", she is blessed with fertile fields with waving, golden grain, or standing white with cotton, or other colors of various flourishing crops. There are millions of acres of timber lands; a fabulous storehouse of minerals and oil beneath the earth's crust; and all sizes of farms and ranches with fine cattle and sheep without number grazing upon grassy, green landscapes. The beauty of our country takes the breath away. There are the majestic mountains, the magnificent forests where wild beasts roam freely, the sparkling lakes and rivers, the vast scenic shoreline bordering two great oceans and the Gulf, and even the deserts and wastelands of the rugged West have their own unique beauty. There is no lack of variety in the scenery or climate in this land of ours.

Added to all our natural blessings are the great cities, a network of super highways that speeds up transportation, and a communications system that is second to none. And, let no man deceive you, we manufacture the best products in the world. The words "Made in America" stand for quality. Some of our own people, especially the media, go to great lengths to find fault, criticize, and run down our country and everything that we do, accomplish, or even stand for. Everything that goes wrong in the world is blamed on America, it seems. But we Americans have nothing to be ashamed of or to apologize for. The United States is still the dominant force in technology, innovation, productivity, and profits.

Who has blessed America? It is God. We have not done it ourselves. It is not by our own wisdom, genius, or power that we are blessed. It is not through the efforts of any one person -- scientist, genius, or political leader. Neither is it through a group of people in industry, education, or religion that we are blessed. It is God who blesses,

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and everyone benefits from these blessings, regardless of who he is or his station in life - the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the righteous man and the sinner. Everyone, including the atheist, the agnostic, and even the "anti-Christ" (meaning anyone opposed to Christ), benefits from the blessings heaped upon America by God. Everyone benefits from God's goodness.

God is the Creator. He is all-powerful. He has the power to raise up nations to do His will, and He can also bring them down. All through history, this has been true. The Bible is a history of God's dealings with man, and it is here that we read about how He raised up Egypt, a polytheistic nation, for a purpose. The same was true of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Macedonian Empire, the great Roman Empire (Daniel 4:17; 5:18, 19) and many other lesser-known kingdoms and peoples too numerous to mention. A little over two-hundred years ago, God, through His providence, laid the foundation for a great nation upon the shores of this Western Hemisphere - a republic, a nation free. And I believe it was according to His master plan.

But the mystery of it all is this: Why has God blessed this nation above all others? It is not a question easily answered, for it is impossible to know the mind of God. But, to my mind comes at least two good reasons:

First, He raised up this nation to be a blessing to the rest of the world. Try to imagine what the world would be like without the United States of America. Our enemies hate us and want to destroy us. This is hard for us to understand, but it is so. When the news flashed around the world of the destruction of the two towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, there was rejoicing and dancing in the streets in the Mid-East and other places. But just suppose that it did happen. Just suppose that the world should wake up one morning to read the headline of the newspaper: "AMERICA IS NO MORE!". What should it mean to the world? What effect would it have? The impact upon mankind would be devastating. What would have happened to Russia when Communism collapsed if it had not been for the U.S.A.? America was there with a safety net. The same can be said of many other countries throughout the world. When trouble comes to them, who do they come running to for help?

As Egypt was to the ancient world, America has long been the world's breadbasket. The rest of the world does not have the ability to produce the food needed to feed its exploding population. European nations can't. Russia can't. China can barely feed its own people. Certainly the Middle Eastern countries can't. They can't eat oil! They have to have a market for their petroleum. Without America, they would be back in the old days, riding camels and donkeys around in the desert rather than in air-conditioned, chauffeur-driven Mercedes. Where would their food come from without America? They are able to produce some, but not enough. Starvation and disease would be rampant. Those nations that lean so heavily upon the American dollar would be suddenly embroiled in economic chaos. It would bring about a world-wide economic depression, the likes of which the world has never seen.

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Without the American dollar, their money would not be worth much, if anything. Inflation would skyrocket. It would take a wheelbarrow of their money to buy a loaf of bread.

Suppose there was no more America. What would happen if the American market suddenly disappeared? Where would other countries such as China, Korea, Mexico, Germany, France, and England sell their products? Where would they be able to buy products equal to those produced in America? If this would bring about a hardship in these prosperous countries, what would it mean to Third World countries? The people of the world should stop and take stock and thank God that He has so abundantly blessed America, because they, too, benefit from those blessings.

As with Egypt long ago, the world today looks to the United States for protection and leadership. When there is a crisis in other parts of the world, who do they turn to? When they need a loan amounting to billions of dollars, where do they go? For a hundred years, America has been a stabilizing influence upon the rest of the world. What would happen if this ceased? The world would suddenly find itself in deep turmoil and with no friend to turn to. What would have happened had the United States not entered World War I? What would have happened to Europe had the Kaiser won? The same question may be asked about WWII. The war was all but lost in Europe when America stepped into the fight. Adolf Hitler would have realized his goal of a Third Reich. Churchill knew it and confessed that he was greatly relieved when the United States declared war upon Germany and Italy. It was then that he said that he became confident of victory. What if the Japanese had been victorious in the Pacific? Where would we be if the "Greatest Generation" had not been so great?

Second, God has blessed this nation for the sake of the preservation and spread of Christianity. America has become recognized as the center of Christian faith and values. No longer is it Jerusalem as it was in the first century. No longer is it Rome. No longer is it France or England where there are those huge, but empty, Cathedrals, monuments of an age long-gone. From the shores of these United States goes forth throughout the world the preservation and advancement of Christianity. It is not a state-sponsored religion. It is promulgated by individuals and religious organizations protected by the guarantees of our Constitution. More than once, Christianity has experience perilous times because of tyranny and persecution in the old world and has almost ceased to exist in its purity and simplicity. By making war, the Muslims overran Asia and parts of Europe and Africa. Christianity was almost wiped out by the sword. Even in Europe, certain churches became corrupt, politically-motivated, and state-supported, and all others persecuted. New Testament Christianity could not flourish in such a climate. Then came the discovery of a new fertile land which lay far to the west across a vast ocean. People from all over Europe and other places braved the long voyage in frail sailing ships to come to this new land, seeking freedom and to establish homes. True, some came only for greedy economic gain, but they did contribute, in one way or another, to the advancement of

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this nation as a whole and to make it what it is today. Others without number, however, came seeking to worship God as they chose without fear of molestation.

Why has this American experiment succeeded while others have failed? For instance, the countries of Central and South America seemed, to the early explorers, more promising than North America because of their vast wealth in gold and silver. Shipload after shipload of gold, silver, precious stones, and priceless artifacts were sent to Europe. But contrast those South American countries with the United States today. Why the difference? I think the answer is obvious. It is engraved upon every coin - "In God We Trust". Those who settled South America went there for the wealth it had to offer. But, most of those who came to these shores did so because of a higher and more noble reason - to serve God as they saw fit. Yes, indeed, God has blessed America.

How long will God continue blessing America? Until time is no more, we hope, but we have no guarantee. The Children of Israel basked for two-thousand years in the bright sunlight of God's blessings, but that ended when they sinned and finally rejected Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, as the promised Messiah. Even Sodom was blessed. It was evidently a large and prosperous city in the days of Abraham. It was compared to the Garden of Eden. It had its attractions. It could have been advertised that it was one of the best places to live in that day and age. There must have been reasons why Lot chose to move his family there. But it was a sinful city. It was so sinful that God decreed and announced that it would be destroyed. None other than the second person in the God-head, along with two angels, brought the message to Abraham. Abraham pleaded for the city. He asked God if he would still destroy the city if just fifty righteous people could be found there. God promised that He would not destroy Sodom for the sake of fifty people. Then, he asked about forty-five. God said that he would not destroy the city for the sake of forty-five. But Abraham knew of the wicked reputation of Sodom and seemed to doubt that even forty-five righteous people could be found in the ancient metropolis. He continued to negotiate with God. He asked about thirty, then twenty, and finally ten, and God declared that He would not destroy Sodom for the sake of even ten. But, not even ten righteous people could be found there, and the city was destroyed in fire and brimstone. There are places on the western side of the Dead Sea where powdered balls of almost pure sulfur have been found where the cities of the plain were destroyed in the days of Abraham.

Righteousness has exalted this nation. It has prospered because it has always been made up of good, honest, hard-working people who believe in God and seek to honor Him. But what if morals continue to decline? What if this country continues "sinking down to Sodom" as William Bennett expresses it? What if our crime-rate continues to climb? What if the faith in God of our young people is destroyed by the teaching of atheistic evolution in the school room? What then? Will America turn out to be another Sodom?

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In Psalm 127:1, we have this warning: "...*(E)xcept the Lord keep the city (or nation) the watchman waketh but in vain.*"

CHAPTER XIX

"EVERYTHING WILL BE ALRIGHT"

*"I have fought a good fight, I have finished
my course, I have kept the faith." (II Tim. 4:7)*

I loved my parents, but there was a close, special relationship between Mammy and me. She helped to raise me from the time I was born. My mother was in poor health, and this was a great help to her. She bought books such as Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*, *Uncle Remus*, *Huckleberry Finn* and others and read to me when I was a small child. This opened for me the window of the world and created within my heart a love of books. As a little boy, I guess I became a little like my hero, Tom Sawyer. Mammy also became a friend and confidant. During my teenage years, I shared thought with her that I would have hesitated sharing even with my parents. I would go to her often for advice. I think my mother was a little jealous. She would make comments like: "I think you love Mammy more than me!" Sometimes Mammy would intercede on my behalf. If I were spoiled, my grandmother had a big part in it. When I started driving, sometimes I would take her for a drive, just she and I alone, and we would talk. I would driver her over to her old home place near Millersburg and to the cemetery where her mother was buried. She thoroughly enjoyed these trips.

When I started preaching almost every Sunday, it was apparent that I needed my own car. I saw one in Nashville that I liked, a 1948 blue Plymouth coupe. My dad had sold a bull and set aside the money for my car. We drove to Nashville and bought it. I had it only a few weeks when one night, driving home from a gospel meeting at Raus, it threw a rod. I took it to Murfreesboro and had an estimate on having it fixed. It was going to cost a lot. I remembered seeing a 1950 blue Plymouth coupe for sale on a dealer's lot. I had seen it when I had met my cousin, Harold Beasley, in town a few days before and went with him to buy a car. It was also a 1950 Plymouth coupe. The dealer allowed me to take it home to show my parents. It was going to cost \$1500 including my trade-in, a good deal more than what we had in the older car. When I got home, my parents were not there, only my grandmother. This suited me just fine. I said, "Mammy, let's go for a drive." She was always ready to do that. I got her into the car and we drove around the road for a few miles. She said, "Son, I'd have this car, if I were you." That's all I wanted to hear! I knew that if I got her approval, the car would be mine! It was.

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Goodbye Mammy

My grandmother became ill, and my mother took her to Doctor White in Murfreesboro. The prognosis was not good. She had cancer of the liver. We tried to keep it from her, but I am sure she suspected the worst. Gradually, she lost weight and became weaker. She had to go into the hospital for tests and a blood transfusion. While she was there, I went to see her, and during the visit, she said, "Son, pray for me." I answered: "Mammy, I pray for you every day." She squeezed my hand tight and looked me in the eye and said, "Son, I know that if you pray for me that everything will be all right."

This hit me like a baseball bat right between the eyes. I knew she was dying; it was only a matter of time. I was young and felt like I had let her down somehow. Maybe I had not prayed long enough or hard enough. I felt as if it were my fault. I left and cried all the way home. Later, I came to a better understanding of the teachings of the Bible on prayer and God's dealings with man, and I came to have peace with myself and decided that Mammy had it right: "Everything will be all right."

Not long after this, while at home, Mammy went into a coma. It was on a Sunday morning. Before long, the front porch and yard were filled with family members and neighbors. The word had gotten around quickly. Mrs. Crosslin of the telephone exchange saw to that. She had overheard our call to Woodfin and Moore for an ambulance to take her to the hospital and began spreading the word around. I rode with mammy in the ambulance, and that was the last ride we had together. She never awoke from the coma, but drifted peacefully into that eternal sleep.

She was brought home in a casket, and friends and neighbors came for the visitation. The funeral was in the Church of Christ building with Brother Clyde Gleaves officiating, and the burial in the Fosterville cemetery next to my grandfather, Milt. There were many floral offerings which the family appreciated. I overheard different people praising my grandmother. Someone commented, "If Madge doesn't get to heaven, nobody will!" I believed that at that very moment, my grandmother was seeing and experiencing those things that we who are still living have only thought about and read about in the Bible. And, I thought to myself, "Yes, Mammy, I know everything will be all right."

Grandparents Are People, Too!

Every child needs and deserves at least one grandparent like Mammy. Art Linkletter, author of *Old Age is Not for Sissies*, wrote that grandparents' best gift is "unconditional love". "I love you. I'm going to love you, no matter what you do."

I found in some old files an article by Mary Beth Macklin written several years ago offering advice to grandparents. She suggested the following rules (comments

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are mine.):

- **Understand your role.** You are not the parent. You step in only when needed. When there are problems, you are a source of support and reserve. They may call upon you for sage advice, but don't step in uninvited.
- **Follow home-turf rules.** If you are in their house, you abide by their rules. On the other hand, if you are at home and the parents don't discipline the children the way they should, it's up to you to set the rules.
- **Be willing to bend.** Don't be too rigid. Remember when you were their age.
- **Be a good friend, but be an *old* friend.** Act your age. Kids want a grandparent, not another kid.
- **Take advantage of your experience.** Introduce your grandchildren to their roots with scrapbooks, photo albums, and stories. I used to beg my grandmother to tell me about the "olden days". She laughed about me calling them the "olden days". Teach your grandchildren a skill you have; fishing, hunting, knitting, horse back riding, etc.
- **Schedule one-on-one time with your grandchildren.** My attorney told me that he had taken his twelve-year-old grandson with him on a trip to Ireland - just the two of them together for a whole week. What fun they had, and what memories were built!
- **Stay in regular contact if distance separates you.** You may not be able to see them as often as you wish, but there are the telephone and e-mail. I was working away at my computer one day, when suddenly there was a voice saying, "You have mail." It was from my granddaughter in Texas, Roseanna. What a pleasant surprise!
- **Visit as often as you can.** Better still, take the grandkids on vacation. That gives you time alone with them and allows parents some time to themselves.
- **Don't feel that you have to spend all your time with your grandchildren.** Grandparents are people, too, and have a right to have time for their own pursuits. They have reared their own children, and they deserve it. As someone has expressed it: "Grandparents love to see their grandchildren come, and they also love to seem them go home!"



Goodbye, Mammy

**THIS IS THE END OF MY STORY,
BUT THE SAGA CONTINUES.**

AFTER WORD

We have fast-forwarded more than fifty years and are now well into the twenty-first century. Much has happened in our world. There have been wars and rumors of wars. Headlines have told of floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves, and such like. The world population has exploded, nearing the seven billion mark. Man has made spectacular advancement in just about every area of life. Space travel has become a reality, and humans have even walked on the moon. The world is changing rapidly -- some for the better, and some for the worse. But, life goes on.

There have also been many changes around Fosterville and Soapstone Hill. So many of those neighbors that I knew and friends that I grew up with are no longer with us. Children have grown up and have their own families, and many have moved away. Others have moved into the community and built new homes. One by one, the country stores closed. The last one to close was Harris/Watkins, only that was not the name of it then. It had been sold to Billy and Angie (Bikie) Lynch and was run by my cousin, Bud Powell and his wife, Flora. The old store building still stands empty, but the Post Office continues to open part-time. Craig Lynch, the son of Billy and Bikie, is the Post Master, assisted by Jo Ann (Chrisman) Fox. Studebaker's blacksmith shop had closed many years before. Passenger trains stopped running, and the old depot building was moved away and finally burned. Only slow-moving freight trains with diesel engines pass occasionally, never stopping except to take a side track when meeting another train. Church attendance has also declined. As automobiles have become more plentiful, families have a tendency to do their shopping in town and to go to church where there are bigger crowds and more young people that children can associate with. Thus, small, rural communities have suffered because they cannot compete.

Soapstone Hill, though, is still there. It is where it has always been. It still is a challenge to the adventuresome. It retains its recognizable and imposing shape and size, but it doesn't look exactly the same as it did when I was a boy. When Mr. Albert Alderson was living, it was kept clean, but now it has grown up with saplings, vines, and underbrush. Of course, the good thing about this is that the roots will keep the hill from washing away. Nothing on earth is permanent, but I venture to say that Soapstone and all the other hills and mountains of Middle Tennessee will remain until the Lord returns.

After Mr. Albert died, the farm was sold to a family by the name of Nemis. Mr. Nemis' job kept him away most of the time, and the farm was run by his wife and daughter. A few years later, it was purchased by Gray Lynch whose parents, John and Margie, owned the farm right across the road from our home place, joining the Soapstone property to the east. There is an interesting story connected with this transaction. Gray had retired from the insurance business and moved back into the

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community. He and his wife had bought a farm on 231 Highway between Fosterville and Deason where they lived several years. When the Soapstone property became available, he sold his place on the highway and bought it. Some time later, the new owners of the highway farm came across a hidden treasure consisting of a large amount of gold. I don't know how much it amounted to, but I have heard that it was in the neighborhood of a half-million dollars. This reminds one of the story that Jesus told of the buried treasure.

When Gray grew old and could no longer look after the farm, he leased it to a fox hunting club for a period of ten years. The club fenced it in completely with a high chain-link fence to keep the foxes in and undesirable animals and humans out. When Gray died, Soapstone and the farm went to his heirs. But it has again changed hands, becoming the property of Craig and Pam Lynch who have ambitious plans for it. There is a chalet with a "million-dollar view" that he rents by the day or week. It has also been rezoned to permit horses that visitors can rent and ride. He plans riding and hiking trails all around and to the top of Soapstone Hill. For more information, you may check out their website, www.libertygapchalet.com.

In 1950, I began college at David Lipscomb College (now University) but usually came home on weekends. I was gradually leaving the nest. However, it was in the shadow of Soapstone Hill that I met my future bride, Jeanette Gibson. She, her mother, Stella, and step-father, James Deaton, had moved into the community from Indiana. I met her on one of my weekend visits. I thought she was the prettiest girls I had ever seen. I joined the competition with the other eligible young men in the community for her attention. But she pretty much ignored all of us. One time, there was a community picnic and ice cream social at the school house. I saw her and a couple of other girls walking around together, and so I went over to make her acquaintance. I put on my best behavior and tried to make a good impression. We talked a little and then went our separate ways. But do you know, to this day, she does not remember meeting me then! Some impression I made!

Jeanette and I married in 1954 soon after my graduation from college. She also grew up in the "Greatest Generation" and is proud of it. We have two "baby-boomers" who are now middle-aged, Philip and Danette. Philip is with the United States Treasury Department and lives near Washington D.C. Danette works for Verizon and lives at the old Soapstone home place. We have two granddaughters, Carissa and Roseanna, going on thirty years old, and two great-grandchildren. For the past twenty-five years, we have made our home on five acres in Brentwood, Tennessee. God has blessed us far more than we deserve.

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